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(54) Title: MODIFIED CUTINASES, DNA, VECTOR AND HOST (57) Abstract There are provided Cutinase variants of a parent Cutinase, wherein the amino acid sequence has been modified in such way that the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved. In particular, the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved by reducing the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme.		

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MODIFIED CUTINASES, DNA, VECTOR AND HOST

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention generally relates to the field of lipolytic enzymes. More in particular, the invention is concerned with lipolytic enzymes which have been modified by means of recombinant DNA techniques, with methods for their production and with their use, particularly in enzymatic detergent compositions.

10

BACKGROUND AND PRIOR ART

Lipolytic enzymes are enzymes which are capable of hydrolysing triglycerides into free fatty acids and diglycerides, monoglycerides and eventually glycerol. They can also split more complex esters such as cutin layers in plants or sebum of the skin. Lipolytic enzymes are used in industry for various enzymatic processes such as the inter- and trans-esterification of triglycerides and the synthesis of esters. They are also used in detergent compositions with the aim to improve the fat-removing properties of the detergent product.

The most widely used lipolytic enzymes are lipases (EC 3.1.1.3). For example, EP-A-258 068 and EP-A-305 216 (both Novo Nordisk) both describe production of fungal lipases via heterologous host micro-organisms by means of rDNA techniques, especially the lipase from Thermomyces lanuginosus/Humicola lanuginosa. EP-A-331 376 (Amano) describes lipases and their production by rDNA techniques, and their use, including an amino acid sequence of lipase from Pseudomonas cepacia. Further examples of lipases produced by rDNA technique are given in WO 89/09263 and EP-A-218 272 (both Gist-Brocades). In spite of the large number of publications on lipases and their modifications, only the lipase from Humicola lanuginosa has so far found wide-spread commercial application as additive for detergent products under the trade name Lipolase (TM).

A characteristic feature of lipases is that they exhibit interfacial activation. This means that the enzyme activity is much higher on a substrate which has formed

interfaces or micelles, than on fully dissolved substrate. Interface activation is reflected in a sudden increase in lipolytic activity when the substrate concentration is raised above the critical micel concentration (CMC) of the substrate, and interfaces are formed. Experimentally this phenomenon can be observed as a discontinuity in the graph of enzyme activity versus substrate concentration.

The mechanism of interfacial activation in lipases has been interpreted in terms of a conformational change in the protein structure of the lipase molecule. In the free, unbound state, a helical lid covers the catalytic binding site. Upon binding to the lipid substrate, the lid is displaced and the catalytic site is exposed. The helical lid is also believed to interact with the lipid interface, thus allowing the enzyme to remain bound to the interface.

WO-A-92/05249 (Novo Nordisk) discloses genetically modified lipases, in particular the lipase from Humicola lanuginosa, which have been modified at the lipid contact zone. The lipid contact zone is defined in the application as the surface which in the active form is covered by the helical lid. The modifications involve deletion or substitution of one or more amino acid residues in the lipid contact zone, so as to increase the electrostatic charge and/or decrease the hydrophobicity of the lipid contact zone, or so as to change the surface conformation of the lipid contact zone. This is achieved by deleting one or more negatively charged amino acid residues in the lipid contact zone, or substituting these residues by neutral or more positively charged amino acids, and/or by substituting one or more neutral amino acid residues in the lipid contact zone by positively charged amino acids, and/or deleting one or more hydrophilic amino acid residues in the lipid contact zone, or substituting these residues by hydrophobic amino acids.

Cutinases are a sub-class of enzymes (EC 3.1.1.50), the wax ester hydrolases. These enzymes are capable of degrading cutin, a network of esterified long-chain fatty acids and fatty alcohols which occurs in plants as a protective coating on leaves and stems. In addition, they

possess some lipolytic activity, i.e. they are capable of hydrolysing triglycerides. Thus they can be regarded as a special kind of lipases. Contrary to lipases, however, cutinases do not exhibit any substantial interfacial
5 activation.

Cutinases can be obtained from a number of sources, such as plants (e.g. pollen), bacteria and fungi. Because of their fat degrading properties, cutinases have been proposed as ingredients for enzymatic detergent compositions. For
10 example, WO-A-88/09367 (Genencor) suggests combinations of a surfactant and a substantially pure bacterial cutinase enzyme to formulate effective cleaning compositions. Disclosed are detergent compositions comprising a cutinase obtained from the Gram negative bacterium Pseudomonas putida ATCC 53552.
15 However, in the more recent European patent application EP-A-476 915 (Clorox), it is disclosed that the same enzyme - which is then referred to as a lipase - is no more effective than other lipases in removing oil stains from fabrics, when used by conventional methods.

20 Recently, the three-dimensional structure has been determined of a cutinase from Fusarium solani pisi (Martinez et al. (1992) Nature 356, 615-618). It was found that this cutinase does not possess a helical lid to cover the catalytic binding site. Instead, the active site serine
25 residue appears to be accessible to the solvent. These findings appear to confirm the present theory about the mechanism of interfacial activation in lipases.

The cutinase gene from Fusarium solani pisi has been cloned and sequenced (Ettinger et al., (1987)
30 Biochemistry 26, 7883-7892). WO-A-90/09446 (Plant Genetics Systems) describes the cloning and production of this gene in E. coli. The cutinase can efficiently catalyse the hydrolysis and the synthesis of esters in aqueous and non-aqueous media, both in the absence and the presence of and interface between
35 the cutinase and the substrate. On the basis of its general stability, it is suggested that this cutinase could be used to produce cleaning agents such as laundry detergents and other specialized fat dissolving preparations such as

cosmetic compositions and shampoos. A way to produce the enzyme in an economic feasible way is not disclosed, neither are specific enzymatic detergent compositions containing the cutinase.

5 Because of this characteristic feature, i.e. the absence of interfacial activation, we define for the purpose of this patent application Cutinases as lipolytic enzymes which exhibit substantially no interfacial activation. Cutinases therefore differ from classical lipases in that
10 they do not possess a helical lid covering the catalytic binding site.

As mentioned above, only the lipase derived from Humicola lanuginosa has so far found wide-spread commercial application as additive for detergent products under the
15 trade name Lipolase (TM). In his article in Chemistry and Industry 1990, pages 183-186, Henrik Malmos notes that it is known that generally the activity of lipases during the washing process is low, and Lipolase (TM) is no exception. During the drying process, when the water content of the
20 fabric is reduced, the enzyme regains its activity and the fatty stains are hydrolysed. During the following wash cycle the hydrolysed material is removed. This also explains why the effect of lipases is low after the first washing cycle, but significant in the following cycles. Thus, there is still
25 a need for lipolytic enzymes which exhibit any significant activity during the washing process.

We have found that Cutinases, in particular the cutinase from Fusarium solani pisi, exhibit a clear in-the-wash effect. However, there is still a need for Cutinase
30 variants having improved in-the-wash lipolytic activity in anionic-rich detergent compositions, and for methods for producing such enzymes.

In accordance with the present invention, there are provided Cutinase variants wherein the amino acid sequence
35 has been modified in such way that the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved. More in particular, it was found that the lipolytic activity of eukaryotic Cutinases, more in particular of Cutinases from Fusarium

solani pisi, Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides and Magnaporthe grisea, in anionic-rich detergent compositions may be improved by reducing the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme.

5

DEFINITION OF THE INVENTION

A Cutinase variant of a parent Cutinase, wherein the amino acid sequence has been modified in such way that
10 the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved, in particular by reducing the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme.

15 DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to variants of Cutinase enzymes. As discussed above, Cutinases can be obtained from a number of sources, such as plants (e.g. pollen), bacteria and fungi. The Cutinase to be used as parent Cutinase or starting
20 material in the present invention for the modification by means of recombinant DNA techniques, is chosen from the group of eukaryotic Cutinases. Eukaryotic Cutinases can be obtained from various sources, such as plants (e.g. pollen), or fungi.

The group of (eukaryotic) fungal Cutinases appears
25 to comprise two families with different specificities, leaf-specificity and stem-specificity. Cutinases with leaf-specificity tend to have an acidic or neutral pH-optimum, whereas Cutinases with stem-specificity tend to have an alkaline pH-optimum. Cutinases having an alkaline pH-optimum
30 are more suitable for use in alkaline built detergent compositions such as heavy duty fabric washing powders and liquids. Cutinase having an acidic to neutral pH-optimum are more suitable for light duty products or rinse conditioners, but also for industrial cleaning products.

35 In the following Table I, four different Cutinases with stem-specificity are listed, together with their pH-optima.

TABLE I

Examples of cutinases with stem-specificity	pH-optimum
<u>Fusarium solani pisi</u>	9
<u>Fusarium roseum culmorum</u>	10
5 <u>Rhizoctonia solani</u>	8.5
<u>Alternaria brassicicola</u> (PNBase I)	9

Especially preferred in the present invention are Cutinases which can be derived from wild type Fusarium solani pisi (Ettinger et al. 1987). When used in certain detergent compositions, this Cutinase exhibits clear "in-the-wash" effects.

Also suitable as parent Cutinase or starting material in the present invention for the modification by means of recombinant DNA techniques, are Cutinases having a high degree of homology of their amino acid sequence to the Cutinase from Fusarium solani pisi. Examples are the Cutinases from Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides and Magnaporthe grisea. In Figure 11 the partial amino acid sequences of these Cutinases are shown and it can be seen that there is a high degree of homology.

Alternative to the improvement of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase by modification of its gene, genetic information encoding Cutinases from other eukaryotic organisms can be isolated using 5'- and 3'- DNA probes derived from Fusarium solani pisi, Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides and Magnaporthe grisea cDNA encoding (pro)cutinase and probes recognizing conserved sequences in other Cutinases and if necessary, using these probes to multiply cDNA's derived from messenger RNA's (mRNA's) of Cutinase producing eukaryotic cells using the Polymerase Chain Reaction or PCR technology (see, for example WO-A-92/05249). After cloning and expression the thus obtained Cutinases encoding genes in E. coli according to standard procedures, the Cutinases are tested on their performance in (fatty) soil removal under appropriate conditions. In this way a number of natural occurring variants of the above mentioned Cutinases can be obtained

with improved in-the-wash performance. Moreover, the sequences of these natural occurring Cutinases provide an excellent basis for further protein engineering of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.

5 On the basis of new ideas about the factors determining the "in-the-wash" activity of lipolytic enzymes and careful inspection of the 3D structure of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase (Martinez et al. (1992) Nature 356, 615-618) and inspection of the 3D structure of Fusarium solani pisi
10 cutinase we have found a number of possibilities how to improve the compatibility of this cutinase and Cutinases in general to anionic surfactants by means of recombinant DNA techniques.

 Starting from the known 3D structure of the
15 Fusarium solani pisi cutinase, the 3D-structure of the cutinase from Colletotrichum gloeosporioides was obtained by applying rule-based comparative modelling techniques as implemented in the COMPOSER module of the SYBYL molecular modelling software package (TRIPOS associates, Inc. St.
20 Louis, Missouri). The obtained model of the Colletotrichum gloeosporioides cutinase was refined by applying energy minimization (EM) and molecular dynamics (MD) techniques as implemented in the BIOSYM molecular modelling software package (BIOSYM, San Diego, California). During EM and MD
25 refinement of the model a knowledge-based approach was applied. The model was simultaneously optimized for the detailed energy terms of the potential energy function and known structural criteria. Model quality was assessed by criteria such as number and quality of hydrogen bonds,
30 hydrogen bonding patterns in the secondary structure elements, the orientation of peptide units, the values of and main chain dihedral angles, the angle of interaction of aromatic groups and the sizes of cavities. Moreover, the model was checked for inappropriately buried charges,
35 extremely exposed hydrophobic residues and energetically unfavourable positions of disulphide bridges. Relevant side-chain rotamers were selected from the Ponder & Richards rotamer library (Ponder et al. (1987) J.Mol.Biol. 193, 775-

791). The final choice of a particular side-chain rotamer from this library was based on structural criteria evaluations as mentioned above. MD was used to anneal the side-chain atoms into position. A similar approach was used
5 to obtain the 3D-structure of the cutinase from Magnaporthe grisea.

The present invention shows that Cutinases can be modified in such a way that the interaction with anionic surfactants can be reduced without changing the "in-the-wash"
10 performance of the modified Cutinase.

This may be achieved in a number of ways. First, the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme may be reduced by reducing the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme. For instance, by replacing one or
15 more positively charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolar tail of an anionic surfactant, by lysine residues. It is also possible to reduce the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme shielding the positive
20 charge of such an arginine residue by introducing within a distance of about 6 Å from said arginine a negative charge, e.g. an glutamic acid residue. Alternatively, the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme may be reduced by replacing one or more positively
25 charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolar tail of the anionic surfactant, by uncharged amino acid residues. Furthermore, the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme may be reduced by replacing
30 one or more positively charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolar tail of the anionic surfactant, by negatively charged amino acid residues.

Another approach to reduce the binding between an
35 anionic surfactant and the enzyme is to replace one or more amino acid residues which are located in a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolar tail of the anionic surfactant, by less hydrophobic amino acid residues. These

less hydrophobic amino acid residues are preferably selected from the group consisting of glycine, serine, alanine, aspartic acid and threonine.

Due to their improved anionics compatibility, the Cutinases variants produced according to the invention can bring advantage in enzyme activity, when used as part of an anionic-rich detergent or cleaning compositions. In the context of this invention, anionic-rich means that the detergent or cleaning composition contains a surfactant system which consists for more than 5%, generally more than 10%, and in particular more than 20% of anionic surfactants.

The Cutinase variants of the present invention were found to possess an improved in-the-wash performance during the main cycle of a wash process. By in-the-wash performance during the main cycle of a wash process, it is meant that a detergent composition containing the enzyme is capable of removing a significant amount of oily soil from a soiled fabric in a single wash process in a European type of automatic washing machine, using normal washing conditions as far as concentration, water hardness, temperature, are concerned. It should be born in mind that under the same conditions, the conventional commercially available lipolytic enzyme Lipolase (TM) ex Novo Nordisk does not appear to have any significant in-the-wash effect at all on oily soil.

The in-the-wash effect of an enzyme on oily soil can be assessed using the following assay. New polyester test having a cotton content of less than 10% are prewashed using an enzyme-free detergent product such as the one given below, and are subsequently thoroughly rinsed. Such unsoiled cloths are then soiled with olive oil or another suitable, hydrolysable oily stain. Each tests cloth (weighing approximately 1 g) is incubated in 30 ml wash liquor in a 100 ml polystyrene bottle. The wash liquor contains the detergent product given below at a dosage of 1 g per litre. The bottles are agitated for 30 minutes in a Miele TMT washing machine filled with water and using a normal 30°C main wash programme. The Cutinase variant is preadded to the wash liquor at 3 LU/ml. The control does not contain any enzyme.

The washing powder has the following composition (in % by weight):

LAS	6.9
Soap	2.0
5 Nonionic surfactant	10.0
Zeolite	27.0
Sodium carbonate	10.2
Sodium sulphate	13.0

After washing, the cloths are thoroughly rinsed
 10 with cold water and dried in a tumble dryer with cold air,
 and the amount of residual fat is assessed. This can be done
 in several ways. The common method is to extract the
 testcloth with petroleum ether in a Soxhlet extraction
 apparatus, distilling off the solvent and determining the
 15 percentage residual fatty material as a fraction of the
 initial amount of fat on the cloth by weighing.

According to a second, more sensitive method,
 brominated olive oil is used to soil the test cloths
 (Richards, S., Morris, M.A. and Arklay, T.H. (1968), Textile
 20 Research Journal 38, 105-107). Each test cloth is then
 incubated in 30 ml wash liquor in a 100 ml polystyrene
 bottle. A series of bottles is then agitated in a washing
 machine filled with water and using a normal 30°C main wash
 programme. After the main wash, the test cloths are carefully
 25 rinsed in cold water during 5 seconds. Immediately after the
 rinse, the test cloths dried in a dryer with cold air. After
 drying the amount of residual fat can be determined by
 measuring the bromine content of the cloth by means of X-ray.
 fluorescence spectrometry. The fat removal can be determined
 30 as a percentage of the amount which was initially present on
 the test cloth, as follows:

$$\% \text{ Soil removal} = \frac{\text{Bromine}_{\text{bw}} - \text{Bromine}_{\text{aw}}}{\text{Bromine}_{\text{bw}}} * 100 \%$$

35 wherein: $\text{Bromine}_{\text{bw}}$ denotes the percentage bromine on the
 cloth before the wash and $\text{Bromine}_{\text{aw}}$ the percentage bromine
 after the wash.

A further method of assessing the enzymatic activity is by measuring the reflectance at 460 nm according to standard techniques.

In the context of this invention, a modified,
5 mutated or mutant enzyme or a variant of an enzyme means an enzyme that has been produced by a mutant organism which is expressing a mutant gene. A mutant gene (other than one containing only silent mutations) means a gene encoding an enzyme having an amino acid sequence which has been derived
10 directly or indirectly, and which in one or more locations is different, from the sequence of a corresponding parent enzyme. The parent enzyme means the gene product of the corresponding unaltered gene. A silent mutation in a gene means a change or difference produced in the polynucleotide
15 sequence of the gene which (owing to the redundancy in the codon-amino acid relationships) leads to no change in the amino acid sequence of the enzyme encoded by that gene.

A mutant or mutated micro-organism means a micro-organism that is, or is descended from, a parent micro-
20 organism subjected to mutation in respect of its gene for the enzyme. Such mutation of the organism may be carried out either (a) by mutation of a corresponding gene (parent gene) already present in the parent micro-organism, or (b) by the transfer (introduction) of a corresponding gene obtained
25 directly or indirectly from another source, and then introduced (including the mutation of the gene) into the micro-organism which is to become the mutant micro-organism. A host micro-organism is a micro-organism of which a mutant gene, or a transferred gene of other origin, forms part. In
30 general it may be of the same or different strain or species origin or descent as the parent micro-organism.

In particular, the invention provides mutant forms of the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase disclosed in WO-A-90/09446 (Plant Genetics Systems), and of the Cutinases from
35 Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides and Magnaporthe grisea. These Cutinase variants can be produced by a rDNA modified micro-organism containing a gene obtained or made by means of rDNA techniques.

Once the amino acid residues have been identified that should be replaced by another amino acid residue, for example mutation R17E relative to the sequence of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase or a homologue thereof.

5 It will be clear to the skilled man that such modifications will affect the structure of the Cutinase. Obviously, modifications are preferred which do not affect the electrostatic charge around the active site too much. The inventors have developed the necessary level of understanding
10 of the balance between the inevitable distortion of the conformation of the enzyme and the benefit in increased enzyme activity, which makes it possible to predict and produce successful Cutinase variants with a high rate of success. In the following Table II and elsewhere in this
15 specification, amino-acids and amino acid residues in peptide sequences are indicated by one-letter and three-letter abbreviations as follows:

TABLE II

A = Ala = Alanine	V = Val = Valine
20 L = Leu = Leucine	I = Ile = Isoleucine
P = Pro = Proline	F = Phe = Phenylalanine
W = Trp = Tryptophan	M = Met = Methionine
G = Gly = Glycine	S = Ser = Serine
T = Thr = Threonine	C = Cys = Cysteine
25 Y = Tyr = Tyrosine	N = Asn = Asparagine
Q = Gln = Glutamine	D = Asp = Aspartic Acid
E = Glu = Glutamic Acid	K = Lys = Lysine
R = Arg = Arginine	H = His = Histidine

In this specification, a mutation present in the
30 amino acid sequence of a protein, and hence the mutant protein itself, may be described by the position and nature of the mutation in the following abbreviated way: by the identity of an original amino acid residue affected by the mutation; the site (by sequence number) of the mutation; and
35 by the identity of the amino acid residue substituted there in place of the original. If there is an insertion of an extra amino acid into the sequence, its position is indicated by one or more subscript letters attached to the number of

the last preceding member of the regular sequence or reference sequence.

For example, a mutant characterised by substitution of Arginine by Glutamine in position 17 is designated as: Arg17Glu or R17E. A (hypothetical) insertion of an additional amino acid residue such as proline after the Arginine would be indicated as Arg17ArgPro or R17RP, alternatively as *17aP, with the inserted residue designated as position number 17a. A (hypothetical) deletion of Arginine in the same position would be indicated by Arg17* or R17*. The asterisk stands either for a deletion or for a missing amino acid residue in the position designated, whether it is reckoned as missing by actual deletion or merely by comparison or homology with another or a reference sequence having a residue in that position.

Multiple mutations are separated by plus signs, e.g. R17E+S54I+A128F designates a mutant protein carrying three mutations by substitution, as indicated for each of the three mentioned positions in the amino acid sequence. The mutations given in the following Table may be combined if desired.

The Table III given below shows certain useful examples of Cutinase variants according to the invention, based on the sequence of the Cutinases from Fusarium solani pisi, and Magnaporthe grisea.

TABLE III

Variants of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase:

R17L, R17K, R17E, L51A, L51S, R78L, T80D, R88E, R96N, R96Q, R156L, A195S, R196A, R196K, R196E.

30 Variants of Magnaporthe grisea cutinase:

A80D, A88E, R156L.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there is provided a process for producing the Cutinase variants of the invention. Naturally occurring Cutinase producing micro-organisms are usually plant pathogens and these micro-organisms are not very suitable to act as host cell for modified Cutinases genes. Consequently, the genes coding for modified (pro)Cutinases were integrated in rDNA

vectors that can be transferred into the preferred host micro-organism for rDNA technology. For this purpose rDNA vectors essentially similar to the rDNA vector described in WO-A-90/09446 can be used.

5 Naturally occurring Cutinase producing micro-organisms are not very suitable for fermentation processes. To improve the yield of the fermentation process a gene coding for improved Cutinases should be transferred into micro-organisms that can growth fast on cheap medium and are
10 capable to synthesize and secrete large amounts of Cutinase. Such suitable rDNA modified (host micro-organisms) according to the present invention are bacteria, among others, Bacilli, Corynebacteria, Staphylococci and Streptomyces, or lower eukaryotes such as Saccharomyces cerevisiae and related
15 species, Kluyveromyces marxianus and related species, Hansenula polymorpha and related species, and species of the genus Aspergillus. Preferred host micro-organisms are the lower eukaryotes, because these microorganisms are producing and secreting enzymes very well in fermentation processes and
20 are able to glycosylate the Cutinase molecule. Glycosylation can contribute to the stability of the Cutinase in detergent systems.

The invention also provides genetic material derived from the introduction of modified eukaryotic Cutinase
25 genes, e.g. the gene from Fusarium solani pisi, into cloning rDNA vectors, and the use of these to transform new host cells and to express the genes of the Cutinase variants in the new host cells.

Also provided by the invention are polynucleotides
30 made or modified by rDNA technique, which encode such Cutinase variants, rDNA vectors containing such polynucleotides, and rDNA modified microorganisms containing such polynucleotides and/or such rDNA vectors. The invention also provides corresponding polynucleotides encoding the
35 modified eukaryotic Cutinases, e.g. a polynucleotide having a base sequence that encodes a mature Cutinase variant, in which polynucleotide the final translated codon is followed by a stop codon and optionally having nucleotide sequences

coding for the prepro- or pro-sequence of this Cutinase variant directly upstream of the nucleotide sequences coding for the mature Cutinase variant.

In such a polynucleotide, the Cutinase-encoding
5 nucleotide sequence derived from the organism of origin can be modified in such a way that at least one codon, and preferably as many codons as possible, are made the subject of 'silent' mutations to form codons encoding equivalent aminoacid residues and being codons preferred by a new host,
10 thereby to provide in use within the cells of such host a messenger-RNA for the introduced gene of improved stability.

Upstream of the nucleotide sequences coding for the pro-or mature Cutinases, there can be located a nucleotide sequence that codes for a signal or secretion sequence
15 suitable for the chosen host. Thus an embodiment of the invention relates to a rDNA vector into which a nucleotide sequence coding for a Cutinase variant or a precursor thereof has been inserted.

The nucleotide sequence can be derived for example
20 from:

- (a) a naturally occurring nucleotide sequence (e.g. encoding the original amino acid sequence of the prepro- or pro-cutinase produced by Fusarium solani pisi);
- (b) chemically synthesized nucleotide sequences consisting of
25 codons that are preferred by the new host and a nucleotide sequence resulting in stable messenger RNA in the new host, still encoding the original amino acid sequence;
- (c) genetically engineered nucleotide sequences derived from one of the nucleotide sequences mentioned in preceding
30 paragraphs a or b coding for a Fusarium solani pisi Cutinase with a different amino acid sequence but having superior stability and/or activity in detergent systems.

Summarizing, rDNA vectors able to direct the expression of the nucleotide sequence encoding a Cutinase
35 gene as described above in one of the preferred hosts preferably comprise the following components:

- (a) Double-stranded (ds) DNA coding for mature Cutinase or precutinase or a corresponding precutinase in which at least

- part of the presequence has been removed directly down stream of a secretion signal (preferred for the selected host cell). In cases where the part of the gene that should be translated does not start with the codon ATG, an ATG codon should be
- 5 placed in front. The translated part of the gene should always end with an appropriate stop codon;
- (b) An expression regulon (suitable for the selected host organism) situated upstream of the plus strand of the ds DNA encoding the Cutinase (component (a));
- 10 (c) A terminator sequence (suitable for the selected host organism) situated down stream of the plus strand of the ds DNA encoding the Cutinase (component (a));
- (d1) Nucleotide sequences which facilitate integration, of the ds DNA into the genome of the selected host or,
- 15 (d2) an origin of replication suitable for the selected host;
- (e1) Optionally a (auxotrophic) selection marker. The auxotrophic marker can consist of a coding region of the auxotrophic marker and a defective promoter;
- (e2) Optionally a ds DNA sequence encoding proteins involved
- 20 in the maturation and/or secretion of one of the precursor forms of the Cutinase in the host selected.

Such a rDNA vector can also carry, upstream and/or downstream of the polynucleotide as earlier defined, further sequences facilitative of functional expression of the

25 cutinase. The auxotrophic marker can consist of a coding region of the auxotrophic marker and a defective promoter region.

Another embodiment of this invention is the fermentative production of one of the various Cutinase

30 variants described above. Such a fermentation can either be a normal batch fermentation, fed-batch fermentation or continuous fermentation. The selection of a process to be used depends on the host strain and the preferred down stream processing method (known per se). Thus, the invention also

35 provides a process for producing a Cutinase variant as specified herein, which comprises the steps of fermentatively cultivating an rDNA modified micro-organism containing a gene made by rDNA technique which carries at least one mutation

affecting the amino acid sequence of the Cutinase thereby to confer upon the Cutinase improved activity by comparison with the corresponding parent enzyme, making a preparation of the Cutinase variant by separating the Cutinase produced by the micro-organism either from the fermentation broth, or by separating the cells of the micro-organism from the fermentation broth, disintegrating the separated cells and concentrating or part purifying the Cutinase variant either from said broth or from said cells by physical or chemical concentration or purification methods. Preferably conditions are chosen such that the Cutinase variant is secreted by the micro-organism into the fermentation broth, the enzyme being recovered from the broth after removal of the cells either by filtration or centrifugation. Optionally, the Cutinase variant can then be concentrated and purified to a desired extent. These fermentation processes in themselves apart from the special nature of the micro-organisms can be based on known fermentation techniques and commonly used fermentation and down stream processing equipment.

Also provided by the invention is a method for the production of a modified micro-organism capable of producing a Cutinase variant by means of rDNA techniques, characterized in that the gene coding for the Cutinase variant that is introduced into the micro-organism is fused at its 5'-end to a gene fragment encoding a (modified) pre-sequence functional as a signal- or secretion-sequence for the host organism.

According to a further aspect of the invention, there are provided rDNA modified micro-organisms containing a Cutinase variant gene and able to produce the Cutinase variant encoded by said gene. In an rDNA modified micro-organism, a gene (if originally present) encoding the native Cutinase is preferably removed, e.g. replaced by another structural gene.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there are provided enzymatic detergent compositions comprising the Cutinase variants of the invention. Such compositions are combinations of the Cutinases variants and other ingredients which are commonly

used in detergent systems, including additives for detergent compositions and fully-formulated detergent and cleaning compositions, e.g. of the kinds known per se and described for example in EP-A-258 068.

5 The other components of such detergent compositions can be of any of many known kinds, for example as described in GB-A-1 372 034 (Unilever), US-A-3 950 277, US-A-4 011 169, EP-A-179 533 (Procter & Gamble), EP-A-205 208 and EP-A-206 390 (Unilever), JP-A-63-078000 (1988), and Research
10 Disclosure 29056 of June 1988, together with each of the several specifications mentioned therein, all of which are hereby incorporated herein by reference.

 The Cutinase variants of the present invention can usefully be added to the detergent composition in any
15 suitable form, i.e. the form of a granular composition, a solution or a slurry of the enzyme, or with carrier material (e.g. as in EP-A-258 068 and the Savinase(TM) and Lipolase(TM) products of Novo Nordisk).

 The added amount of Cutinase variant can be chosen
20 within wide limits, for example from 10 - 20,000 LU per gram, and preferably 50 - 2,000 LU per gram of the detergent composition. In this specification LU or lipase units are defined as they are in EP-A-258 068 (Novo Nordisk).

 Similar considerations apply mutatis mutandis in
25 the case of other enzymes, such as proteases, amylases, cellulases which may also be present. Advantage may be gained in such detergent compositions, where protease is present together with the Cutinase variant, by selecting such protease from those having pI lower than 10. EP-A-271 154
30 (Unilever) describes a number of such proteases. Proteases for use together with Cutinase variants can include subtilisin of for example BPN' type or of many of the types of subtilisin disclosed in the literature, e.g. mutant proteases as described in for example EP-A-130 756 or EP-A-
35 251 446 (both Genentech); US-A-4 760 025 (Genencor); EP-A-214 435 (Henkel); WO-A-87/04661 (Amgen); WO-A-87/05050 (Genex); Thomas et al. J.Mol.Biol. (1987) 193, 803-813; Russel et al. Nature (1987) 328, 496-500.

The invention will now be further illustrated in the following Examples. All techniques used for the manipulation and analysis of nucleic acid materials were performed essentially as described in Sambrook et al. (1989),
5 except where indicated otherwise.

In the accompanying drawings is:

Fig. 1A. Nucleotide sequence of cassette 1 of the synthetic
10 Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene and of the constituting oligo-nucleotides. Oligonucleotide transitions are indicated in the cassette sequence. Lower case letters refer to nucleotide positions outside the open reading frame.

Fig. 1B. Nucleotide sequence of cassette 2 of the synthetic
15 Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene and of the constituting oligo-nucleotides. Oligonucleotide transitions are indicated in the cassette sequence.

Fig. 1C. Nucleotide sequence of cassette 3 of the synthetic
20 Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene and of the constituting oligo-nucleotides. Oligonucleotide transitions are indicated in the cassette sequence. Lower case letters refer to nucleotide positions outside the open reading frame.

Fig. 1D. Nucleotide sequence of the synthetic cutinase gene
25 encoding Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase. The cutinase pre-sequence, pro-sequence and mature sequence are indicated. Also the sites used for cloning and the oligonucleotide transitions are indicated. Lower case letters refer to nucleotide
30 positions outside the open reading frame.

Fig. 2. Nucleotide sequence of a synthetic DNA fragment for
linking the Fusarium solani pisi pro-cutinase encoding sequence to a sequence encoding a
derivative of the E. coli phoA pre-sequence. The
35 ribosome binding site (RBS) and the restriction enzyme sites used for cloning are indicated. Also the amino acid sequences of the encoded phoA signal

sequence and part of the cutinase gene are indicated using the one-letter code.

- Fig. 3. Nucleotide sequence of cassette 8, a SacI-BclI fragment which encodes the fusion point of the coding sequences for the invertase pre-sequence and mature Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.
- Fig. 4. Plasmid pUR2741 obtained by deletion of a 0.2 kb SalI-NruI from pUR2740, is an E. coli-S. cerevisiae shuttle vector comprising part of pBR322, an origin of replication in yeast cells derived from the 2 μ m plasmid, a yeast leu2D gene and a fusion of the yeast invertase signal sequence encoding region with a plant α -galactosidase gene under the control of the yeast gal7 promoter.
- Fig. 5. Plasmid pUR7219 is an E. coli-S. cerevisiae shuttle vector comprising part of pBR322, an origin of replication in yeast cells derived from the 2 μ m plasmid, a yeast leu2D gene and a fusion of the yeast invertase signal sequence encoding region with the region encoding the mature Fusarium solani pisi cutinase under the control of the yeast gal7 promoter.
- Fig. 6. Plasmid pUR2740 is an E. coli-S. cerevisiae shuttle vector comprising part of pBR322, an origin of replication in yeast cells derived from the 2 μ m plasmid, a yeast leu2D gene and a fusion of the yeast invertase signal sequence encoding region with a plant α -galactosidase gene under the control of the yeast gal7 promoter.
- Fig. 7. Nucleotide sequence of cassettes 5, 6 and 7, comprising different types of connections of the coding sequences of the ex1A pre-sequence and mature Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.
- Fig. 8. Plasmid pAW14B obtained by insertion of a 5.3 kb SalI fragment of Aspergillus niger var. awamori genomic DNA in the SalI site of pUC19.
- Fig. 9. Plasmid pUR7280 obtained by displacing the BspHI-AflIII fragment comprising the ex1A open reading

frame in pAW14B with a BspHI-AflIII fragment comprising the Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase coding sequence. Thus, plasmid pUR7280 comprises the Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase gene under the control of the A. niger var. awamori promoter and terminator.

Fig. 10. Plasmid pUR7281 obtained by introduction of both the A. nidulans amdS and A. niger var. awamori pyrG selection markers in pUR7280.

Fig. 11. Partial amino acid sequences of the cutinases from Fusarium solani pisi, Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides and Magnaporthe grisea, showing the location of the residues in the 3-D structure.

Fig. 12. Compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and Cutinase variants to a LAS-based detergent composition.

Fig. 13. Compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and Cutinase variants to a PAS-based detergent composition.

Fig. 14. Compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and Cutinase variants to a high-nonionic detergent composition.

Fig. 15. Compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and Cutinase variants to SDS.

Fig. 16. In-the-wash effect for Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and Cutinase variant R17E.

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EXAMPLE 1

Construction of a synthetic gene encoding *Fusarium solani pisi* pre-pro-cutinase.

A synthetic gene encoding *Fusarium solani pisi* pre-pro-cutinase was constructed essentially according to the method described in EP-A-407 225 (Unilever). Based on published nucleotide sequences of *Fusarium solani pisi* genes (Soliday et al. (1984) and WO-A-90/09446, Plant Genetic Systems), a completely synthetic DNA fragment was designed which comprises a region encoding the *Fusarium solani pisi* pre-pro-cutinase polypeptide. Compared to the nucleotide sequence of the original *Fusarium solani pisi* gene, this synthetic cutinase gene comprises several nucleotide changes through which restriction enzyme recognition sites were introduced at convenient positions within the gene without affecting the encoded amino acid sequence. The nucleotide sequence of the entire synthetic cutinase gene is presented in Fig. 1D.

Construction of the synthetic cutinase gene was performed by assembly of three separate cassettes starting from synthetic DNA oligonucleotides. Each synthetic DNA cassette is equipped with an EcoRI site at the start and a HindIII site at the end. Oligonucleotides were synthesized using an Applied Biosystems 380A DNA synthesizer and purified by polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis. For the construction of each of the cassettes the procedure outlined below was followed. Equimolar amounts (50 pmol) of the oligonucleotides constituting a given cassette were mixed, phosphorylated at their 5'-end, annealed and ligated according to standard techniques. The resulting mixture of double stranded DNA molecules was cut with EcoRI and HindIII, size-fractionated by agarose gel electrophoresis and recovered from the gel by electro-elution. The resulting synthetic DNA cassette was

ligated with the 2.7 kb EcoRI-HindIII fragment of pUC9 and transformed to Escherichia coli. The EcoRI-HindIII insert of a number of clones was completely sequenced in both directions using suitable oligonucleotide primers to verify the sequence of the synthetic cassettes. Using this procedure pUR7207 (comprising cassette 1, Fig. 1A), pUR7208 (comprising cassette 2, Fig. 1B) and pUR7209 (comprising cassette 3, Fig. 1C) were constructed. Finally, the synthetic cutinase gene was assembled by combining the 2.9 kb EcoRI-ApaI fragment of pUR7207 with the 0.2 kb ApaI-NheI fragment of pUR7208 and the 0.3 kb NheI-HindIII fragment of pUR7209, yielding pUR7210. This plasmid comprises an open reading frame encoding the complete pre-pro-cutinase of Fusarium solani pisi (Fig. 1D).

15 EXAMPLE 2

Expression of Fusarium solani pisi (pro)cutinase in Escherichia coli.

With the synthetic cutinase gene an expression vector for E. coli was constructed which is functionally similar to the one described in WO-A-90/09446 (Plant Genetic Systems). A construct was designed in which the part of the synthetic gene encoding Fusarium solani pisi pro-cutinase is preceded by proper E. coli expression signals, i.e. (i) an inducible promoter, (ii) a ribosome binding site and (iii) a signal sequence which provides a translational initiation codon and provides information required for the export of the pro-cutinase across the cytoplasmic membrane.

A synthetic linker was designed (see Fig. 2) for fusion of a derivative of the E. coli phoA signal sequence (Michaelis et al., 1983) to the pro-sequence of the synthetic cutinase gene. To optimize cleavage of the signal peptide and secretion of pro-cutinase, the nucleotide sequence of this linker was such that the three C-terminal amino acid residues of the phoA signal sequence (Thr-Lys-Ala) were changed into Ala-Asn-Ala and the N-terminal amino acid residue of the cutinase pro-sequence (Leu 1, see Fig. 1D) was changed into Ala. This construction ensures secretion of cutinase into the

periplasmatic space (see WO-A-90/09446, Plant Genetic Systems).

To obtain such a construct, the 69 bp EcoRI-SpeI fragment comprising the cutinase pre-sequence and part of the pro-sequence was removed from pUR7210 and replaced with the synthetic DNA linker sequence (EcoRI-SpeI fragment) providing the derivative of the E. coli phoA pre-sequence and the altered N-terminal amino acid residu of the cutinase pro-sequence (Fig. 2). The resulting plasmid was named pUR7250 and was used for the isolation of a 0.7 kb BamHI-HindIII fragment comprising a ribosome binding site and the pro-cutinase encoding region fused to the phoA signal sequence encoding region. This fragment was ligated with the 8.9 kb BamHI-HindIII fragment of pMMB67EH (Fürste et al., 1986) to yield pUR7220. In this plasmid the synthetic gene encoding pro-cutinase is fused to the altered version of the phoA signal sequence and placed under the control of the inducible tac-promoter.

E. coli strain WK6 harboring pUR7220 was grown in 2 litre shakeflasks containing 0.5 litre IXTB medium (Tartof and Hobbs, 1988) consisting of:

- 0.017 M KH_2PO_4
- 0.017 M K_2HPO_4
- 12 g/l Bacto-tryptone
- 24 g/l Bacto-yeast extract
- 0.4 % glycerol (v/v)

Cultures were grown overnight at 25°C - 30°C in the presence of 100 $\mu\text{g/ml}$ ampicillin under vigorous shaking (150 rpm) to an OD at 610 nm of 10-12. Then IPTG (isopropyl- β -D-thiogalactopyranoside) was added to a final concentration of 10 μM and incubation continued for another 12-16 hours. When no further significant increase in the amount of produced lipolytic activity could be observed, as judged by the analysis of samples withdrawn from the cultures, the cells were harvested by centrifugation and resuspended in the original culture volume of buffer containing 20% sucrose at 0°C. The cells were collected by centrifugation and resuspended in the original culture volume of icecold water

causing lysis of the cells through osmotic shock. Cell debris was removed by centrifugation and the cell free extract was acidified to pH 4.8 with acetic acid, left overnight at 4°C and the resulting precipitate was removed. A better than 75% pure cutinase preparation essentially free of endogenous lipases was obtained at this stage by means of ultra-filtration and freeze drying of the cell free extract. Alternatively, cutinase could be purified to homogeneity (i.e. better than 95% pure) by loading the acidified cell free extract onto SP-sephadex, eluting the enzyme with buffer at pH 8.0, passage of the concentrated alkaline solution through a suitable volume of DEAE-cellulose (Whatman DE-52) and direct application of the DEAE flow-through to a Q-sepharose HP (Pharmacia) column. Elution with a salt gradient yielded a homogenous cutinase preparation with a typical overall yield of better than 75%.

EXAMPLE 3

Construction of genes encoding variants of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.

Using the synthetic gene for Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase described in Example 1, variant genes comprising alterations in the encoded amino acid sequence were constructed. For this construction essentially the same approach was followed as described in Example 1 for the construction of the three cassettes constituting the complete synthetic gene. For example, a new version of cassette 1 was assembled using the same oligonucleotides (oligos) as described in Example 1, except for the two oligos which cover the coding triplet for the position which is to be mutated. Instead, two new oligos were used, which comprise the mutant sequence but are otherwise identical to the original oligos which they are replacing.

Example 3A

A gene coding for Fusarium solani pisi cutinase variant R17E was constructed using using a variant of cassette 1 incorporating a variant of CUTI1C IG (containing GAG instead of AGA) and a variant of CUTI1I IG (containing

CTC instead of TCT) instead of CUTI1C IG and CUTI1I IG (see Fig. 1A). The new cassette 1 was cloned and sequenced essentially as described in Example 1 and the about 120 bp EcoRI/NruI DNA fragment comprising the mutation R17E was
5 exchanged for the corresponding fragment in pUR7210, yielding pUR7240 (R17E). The 0.6 kB SpeI-HindIII fragment from this plasmids was used to replace the corresponding fragment in pUR7220, yielding the E. coli expression plasmid pUR7222 (R17E). This E. coli expression plasmid was transformed to E.
10 coli strain WK6. Transformants were grown as outlined in Example 2 and the variant pro-cutinase enzyme was recovered and purified essentially as described in Example 2. Similarly Arg 17 could be replaced by Lys or by Leu.

Example 3B

15 A gene coding for Fusarium solani pisi cutinase variant R196E was constructed using using a variant of cassette 3 incorporating a variant of CUTI3F MH (containing GAG instead of CGG) and a variant of CUTI3M MH (containing CTC instead of CCG) instead of CUTI3F MH and CUTI3M MH (see
20 Fig. 3A). The new cassette 3 was cloned and sequenced essentially as described in Example 1 and the about 120 bp EcoRI/NruI DNA fragment comprising the mutation R196E was exchanged for the corresponding fragment in pUR7210, yielding pUR7241 (R196E). The 0.6 kB SpeI-HindIII fragment from this
25 plasmids was used to replace the corresponding fragment in pUR7220, yielding the E. coli expression plasmid pUR7225 (R196E). This E. coli expression plasmid was transformed to E. coli strain WK6. Transformants were grown as outlined in Example 2 and the variant pro-cutinase enzyme was recovered
30 and purified essentially as described in Example 2. By the same method Arg 196 was replaced by Lys (R196K), using a variant of CUTI3F MH (containing AAG instead of CGG) and a variant of CUTI3M MH (containing CTT instead of CCG) instead of CUTI3F MH and CUTI3M MH. Similarly, Arg 196 was replaced
35 by Leu (R196L), using a variant of CUTI3F MH (containing CTT instead of CGG) and a variant of CUTI3M MH (containing AAG instead of CCG) instead of CUTI3F MH and CUTI3M MH. The same method was used to replace Arg 196 by Ala (R196A).

Example 3C

A gene coding for Fusarium solani pisi cutinase variant L51A was constructed using using a variant of cassette 1 incorporating a variant of CUTI1F IG (containing 5 GCT instead of CTC) and a variant of CUTI1L IG (containing AGC instead of GAG) instead of CUTI1F IG and CUTI1L IG (see Fig. 1A). The new cassette 1 was cloned and sequenced essentially as described in Example 1 and the about 120 bp EcoRI/NruI DNA fragment comprising the mutation L51A was 10 exchanged for the corresponding fragment in pUR7210, yielding pUR7242 (L51A). The 0.6 kB SpeI-HindIII fragment from this plasmid was used to replace the corresponding fragment in pUR7220, yielding the E. coli expression plasmid pUR7245 (L51A). This E. coli expression plasmid was transformed to E. 15 coli strain WK6. Transformants were grown as outlined in Example 2 and the variant pro-cutinase enzyme was recovered and purified essentially as described in Example 2. Similarly Leu 51 could be replaced by Ser.

Example 3D

20 Using the cassettes constructed in the examples 3A and 3B, a Cutinase variant with two modifications can be constructed. In example 3A the construction of pUR7240 (R17E) has been described. In example 3B the construction of the EagI/HindIII DNA fragment comprising the mutation R196E has 25 been described. The ApaI/HindIII DNA fragment of pUR7240 (R17E) was replaced by the ApaI/HindIII DNA fragment of pUR7241, yielding pUR7243 (R17E+R196E). The 0.6 kB SpeI-HindIII fragment from this plasmid was used to replace the corresponding fragment in pUR7220, yielding the E. coli 30 expression plasmid pUR7226 (R17E+R196E). This E. coli expression plasmid was used to transform to E. coli strain WK6. Transformants were grown as outlined in Example 2 and the variant pro-cutinase enzyme was recovered and purified essentially as described in Example 2.

35 Example 3E

Using the cassettes constructed in the examples 3A and 3C, a Cutinase variant with two modifications can be constructed. In example 3A the construction of pUR7240 (R17E)

has been described. In example 3C the construction of the DNA fragment comprising the mutation L51A has been described. The BclI/ApaI fragment of pUR7242 was exchanged for the corresponding fragment in pUR7240, yielding pUR7244 (R17E+L51A). The 0.6 kb SpeI-HindIII fragment from this plasmids was used to replace the corresponding fragment in pUR7220, yielding the E. coli expression plasmid pUR7246 (R17E+L51A). This E. coli expression plasmid was used to transform E. coli strain WK6. Transformants were grown as outlined in Example 2 and the variant pro-cutinase enzyme was recovered and purified essentially as described in Example 2.

EXAMPLE 4

Expression of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase in Saccharomyces cerevisiae.

For the expression of the synthetic Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene in Saccharomyces cerevisiae an expression vector was constructed in which a synthetic gene encoding the mature cutinase is preceded by the pre-sequence of S. cerevisiae invertase (Taussig and Carlsson, 1983) and the strong, inducible gal7 promoter (Nogi and Fukasawa, 1983). To prepare the synthetic cutinase gene for such a fusion, an adaptor fragment was synthesized in which the coding sequence for the invertase pre-sequence is fused to the sequence encoding the N-terminus of mature cutinase. This fragment was assembled as an EcoRI-HindIII cassette in pUC9 essentially as described in Example 1 (cassette 8, see Fig. 3), yielding pUR7217. Plasmids pUR7210 and pUR7217 were transformed to E. coli JM110 (a strain lacking the dam methylase activity) and the 2.8 kb BclI-HindIII fragment of pUR7217 was ligated with the 0.6 kb BclI-HindIII fragment of pUR7210, yielding pUR7218 in which the nucleotide sequence coding for the mature cutinase polypeptide is fused with part of the S. cerevisiae invertase pre-sequence coding region.

The expression vector pUR2741 (see Fig. 4) was derived from pUR2740 (Verbakel, 1991, see Fig. 6) by isolation of the 8.9 kb NruI-SalI fragment of pUR2740, filling in the SalI protruding end with Klenow polymerase,

and recircularization of the fragment. The 7.3 kb SacI-HindIII fragment of pUR2741 was ligated with the 0.7 kb SacI-HindIII fragment of pUR7218, yielding pUR7219 (see Fig. 5). Optionally, a S. cerevisiae polIII terminator can be placed
5 behind the cutinase gene, in the HindIII site, which turned out not to be essential for efficient expression of the cutinase gene. The E. coli-S. cerevisiae shuttle plasmid pUR7219 contains a origin for replication in S. cerevisiae strains harboring the 2 μ plasmid (cir⁺ strains), a promoter-
10 deficient version of the S. cerevisiae Leu2 gene permitting selection of high copy number transformants in S. cerevisiae leu2⁻ strains, and the synthetic gene encoding the mature part of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase operably linked to the S. cerevisiae invertase pre-sequence under the regulation of
15 the strong, inducible S. cerevisiae gal7 promoter.

S. cerevisiae strain SU50 (a, cir⁰, leu2, his4, can1), which is identical to strain YT6-2-1L (Erhart and Hollenberg, 1981), was co-transformed with an equimolar mixture of the 2 μ S. cerevisiae plasmid and pUR7219 using a
20 standard protocol for electroporation of yeast cells. Transformants were selected for leucine prototrophy and total DNA was isolated from a number of transformants. All transformants appeared to contain both the 2 μ plasmid and pUR7219, exemplifying that the promoter-deficient version of
25 the leu2 gene contained on pUR7219 can only functionally complement leu2 deficient strains when present in high copy numbers due to the simultaneous presence of the 2 μ yeast plasmid. One of the transformants was cured for the pUR7219 plasmid by cultivation on complete medium for more than 40
30 generations followed by replica-plating on selective and complete solid media, yielding S. cerevisiae strain SU51 (a, cir⁺, leu2, his4, can1).

S. cerevisiae strain SU51 harboring pUR7219 was grown in 1 litre shakeflasks containing 0.2 litre MM medium
35 consisting of:

- | | | |
|---|-----|------|
| - yeast nitrogen base (YNB) without amino acids | 6.7 | g/l |
| - histidine | 20 | mg/l |
| - glucose | 20 | g/l |

Cultures were grown overnight at 30°C under vigorous shaking (150 rpm) to an OD at 610 nm of 2-4. Cells were collected by centrifugation and resuspended in 1 litre of YPGAL medium consisting of:

- 5 - yeast extract 10 g/l
- bacto peptone 20 g/l
- galactose 50 g/l

in 2 litre shake flasks and incubation continued for another 12-16 hours. At regular intervals samples were withdrawn from
10 the culture and centrifuged to remove biomass. The supernatant was analyzed for cutinase activity by a titrimatic assay using olive oil as a substrate. For each sample between 100 and 200 µl of filtrate was added to a stirred mixture of 5.0 ml lipase substrate (Sigma, containing
15 olive oil as a substrate for the lipase) and 25.0 ml of buffer (5 mM Tris-HCl pH 9.0, 40 mM NaCl, 20 mM CaCl₂). The assay was carried out at 30°C and the release of fatty acids was measured by automated titration with 0.05 M NaOH to pH 9.0 using a Mettler DL25 titrator. A curve of the amount of
20 titrant against time was obtained. The amount of lipase activity contained in the sample was calculated from the maximum slope of this curve. One unit of enzymatic activity is defined as the amount of enzyme that releases 1 µmol of fatty acid from olive oil in one minute under the conditions
25 specified above. Such determinations are known to those skilled in the art.

When the production of cutinase activity did no longer increase, cells were removed by centrifugation and the cell free extract was acidified to pH 4.8 with acetic acid
30 and cutinase was recovered as described in Example 1.

EXAMPLE 5

Expression of variants of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase in S. cerevisiae.

35 The 0.5 kb ApaI-HindIII fragment of pUR7241 (R196E) was used to replace the analogous fragment of pUR7218, yielding pUR7229 (R196E), in which the gene comprising the mutation is operably fused to the sequence encoding the S.

cerevisiae signal sequence. The 7.0 kb SacI-HindIII fragment of pUR2741 was ligated with the 0.7 kb SacI-HindIII fragment of pUR7229 (R196E), yielding pUR7235 (R196E). This plasmid was used to transform to S. cerevisiae strain SU51. The
5 resulting transformants were incubated as described in Example 4 and the variant enzyme produced was recovered from the culture broth as described in Examples 4 and 1.

EXAMPLE 6

10 Expression of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase in Aspergilli.

For the expression of the synthetic Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene in Aspergillus niger var. awamori an expression vector was constructed in which the synthetic gene encoding Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase was placed
15 under the control of the A. niger var. awamori strong, inducible exlA promoter (Maat et al., 1992, de Graaff et al., 1992).

The pre-pro-cutinase expression plasmid (pUR7280) was constructed starting from plasmid pAW14B, which was
20 deposited in an E. coli strain JM109 with the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures, Baarn, The Netherlands, under N° CBS 237.90 on 31st May 1990, and contains a ca. 5.3 kb SalI fragment on which the 0.7 kb endoxylanase II (exlA) gene is located, together with 2.5 kb of 5'-flanking sequences and
25 2.0 kb of 3'-flanking sequences (Fig.8). In pAW14B the exlA coding region was replaced by the pre-pro-cutinase coding region. A BspHI site (5'-TCATGA-3') comprising the first codon (ATG) of the exlA gene and an AflII site (5'-CTTAAG-3'), comprising the stopcodon (TAA) of the exlA gene
30 facilitated the construction of pUR7280.

The construction was carried out as follows: pAW14B (7.9 kb) was cut partially with BspHI and the linearized plasmid (7.9 kb) was isolated from an agarose gel. Subsequently the isolated 7.9 kb fragment was cut with BsmI,
35 which cuts a few nucleotides downstream of the BspHI site of interest, to remove plasmids linearized at other BspHI sites. The fragments were separated on an agarose gel and the 7.9 kb BspHI-BsmI fragment was isolated. This was partially cut with

AflII and the resulting 7.2 kb BspHI-AflII fragment was isolated.

The 0.7 kb BspHI-AflII fragment of pUR7210 comprising the entire open reading frame coding for Fusarium solani pisi pre-pro-cutinase was ligated with the 7.2 kb BspHI-AflII fragment of pAW14B, yielding pUR7280. The constructed vector (pUR7280) can subsequently be transferred to moulds (for example Aspergillus niger, Aspergillus niger var. awamori, etc) by means of conventional co-transformation techniques and the pre-pro-cutinase gene can then be expressed via induction of the endoxylanaseII promoter. The constructed rDNA vector can also be provided with conventional selection markers (e.g. amdS or pyrG, hygromycin etc.) and moulds can be transformed with the resulting rDNA vector to produce the desired protein. As an example, the amdS and pyrG selection markers were introduced in the expression vector, yielding pUR7281 (Fig. 10). For this purpose a NotI site was created by converting the EcoRI site (present 1.2 kb upstream of the ATG codon of the pre-pro-cutinase gene) into a NotI site using a synthetic oligonucleotide (5'-AATTGCGGCCGC-3'), yielding pUR7282. Suitable DNA fragment comprising the entire A. nidulans amdS gene and the A. niger var. awamori pyrG gene together with their own promoters and terminators were equipped with flanking NotI sites and introduced in the NotI site of pUR7282, yielding pUR7281 (Fig. 10).

As an alternative approach for the expression of the synthetic Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene in Aspergillus niger var. awamori, expression vectors were constructed in which a synthetic gene encoding the mature cutinase is not preceded by its own pre-pro-sequence, but by the pre-sequence of A. niger var. awamori exlA.

To prepare the synthetic cutinase gene for such fusions, several adaptor fragments were synthesized in which the coding sequence for the exlA pre-sequence is connected to the sequence encoding the N-terminus of mature cutinase in different ways. In cassette 5 this connection is made by fusing the exlA pre-sequence to the pro-sequence of cutinase.

In cassette 6 the exlA pre-sequence is fused with the N-terminal residu of mature cutinase. Cassette 7 is identical with cassette 6, but here the N-terminal residue of the encoded mature cutinase polypeptide has been changed from the original Glycine into a Serine residue in order to better fit the requirements for cleavage of the signal peptide. Cassettes 5, 6 and 7 were assembled from synthetic oligonucleotides essentially as described in Example 1 (see Fig. 7). Cassette 5 was used to displace the 0.1 kb EcoRI-SpeI fragment of pUR7210, yielding pUR7287. Cassettes 6 and 7 were used to displace the 0.1 kb EcoRI-BclI fragment of pUR7210, yielding pUR7288 and pUR7289, respectively. For each of the plasmids pUR7287, pUR7288 and pUR7289 the 0.7 kb BspHI-AflIII fragment was ligated with the 7.2 kb BspHI-AflIII fragment of pAW14B, yielding pUR7290, pUR7291 and pUR7292, respectively.

The constructed rDNA vectors subsequently were transferred to moulds (Aspergillus niger, Aspergillus niger var. awamori) by means of conventional co-transformation techniques and the pre-(pro)-cutinase gene were expressed via induction of the endoxylanaseII promoter. The constructed rDNA vectors can also be provided with conventional selection markers (e.g. amdS or pyrG, hygromycin) and the mould can be transformed with the resulting rDNA vector to produce the desired protein, as illustrated in this example for pUR7280 (see above).

Aspergillus strains transformed with either of the expression vectors pUR7280, pUR7281, pUR7290, pUR7291, pUR7292 (containing the Fusarium solani pisi mature cutinase encoding region with or without the corresponding pro-sequence and either the cutinase signal sequence or the exlA signal sequence under the control of A. niger var. awamori exlA promoter and terminator) were grown under the following conditions: multiple 1 litre shake flasks with 400 ml synthetic media (pH 6.5) were inoculated with spores (final concentration: 10E6/ml). The medium had the following composition (AW Medium):

35

	sucrose	10	g/l
	NaNO ₃	6.0	g/l
	KCl	0.52	g/l
	KH ₂ PO ₄	1.52	g/l
5	MgSO ₄ ·7H ₂ O	0.49	g/l
	Yeast extract	1.0	g/l
	ZnSO ₄ ·7H ₂ O	22	mg/l
	H ₃ BO ₃	11	mg/l
	MnCl ₂ ·4H ₂ O	5	mg/l
10	FeSO ₄ ·7H ₂ O	5	mg/l
	CaCl ₂ ·6H ₂ O	1.7	mg/l
	CuSO ₄ ·5H ₂ O	1.6	mg/l
	NaH ₂ MoO ₄ ·2H ₂ O	1.5	mg/l
	Na ₂ EDTA	50	mg/l

15 Incubation took place at 30°C, 200 rpm for 24 hours in a Mk X incubator shaker. After growth cells were collected by filtration (0.45 µm filter), washed twice with AW Medium without sucrose and yeast extract (salt solution), resuspended in 50 ml salt solution and transferred to 300 ml
20 shake flasks containing 50 ml salt solution to which xylose has been added to a final concentration of 10 g/l (induction medium). Incubation under the same conditions as described above was continued overnight. The resulting cultures were filtered over miracloth to remove biomass and cutinase was
25 recovered essentially as described in Example 2.

EXAMPLE 7

Expression of variants of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase in Aspergilli.

30 By following essentially the route outlined in Example 6, but now using plasmid pUR7240 (R17E) or pUR7241 (R196E) or pUR7242 (L51A) instead of pUR7210 for the construction of fungal expression vectors, variants of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase comprising the above mentioned
35 mutations were produced in Aspergillus niger var. awamori.

EXAMPLE 8

Identification and isolation of genes related to the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene.

Genes encoding cutinases with a varying degree of
5 homology with Fusarium solani pisi cutinase were isolated
from different fungi. Fungal cultures were grown in 500 ml
shakeflasks containing 200 ml of the medium described by
Hankin and Kolattukudy (1968) supplemented with 0.25% glucose
and incubated for 4 days at 28°C in a Mk X incubator shaker
10 (100 rpm). At this time the glucose had been consumed and
cutinase production was induced by the addition of cutin
hydrolysate essentially as described by Ettinger et al.
(1987). At regular intervals samples were withdrawn from the
culture and analyzed for the presence of lipolytic activity
15 according to standard techniques (see Example 4). Normally,
about two days after induction lipolytic activity could be
demonstrated and at that time the cells were harvested by
filtration using standard techniques. The mycelia were
washed, frozen in liquid nitrogen and lyophilized according
20 to standard techniques. Total cellular RNA preparations were
isolated using the guanidinium thiocyanate method and
purified by cesium chloride density gradient centrifugation,
essentially as described by Sambrook et al. (1989). PolyA(+) mRNA
fractions were isolated using a polyATtract mRNA
25 isolation kit (Promga). The polyA(+) mRNA fractions were used
in a Northern hybridization analysis using a cDNA fragment
from the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene as a probe
according to standard techniques, to verify the expression of
cutinase-related genes. Preparations of mRNA comprising
30 material capable of hybridizing with the probe were used for
the synthesis of cDNA using a ZAP cDNA synthesis kit
(Stratagene, La Jolla) according to the instructions of the
supplier, yielding cDNA fragments with an XhoI cohesive end
flanking the poly-A region and an EcoRI adaptor at the other
35 end. The obtained cDNA fragments were used for the
construction of expression libraries by directional cloning
in the sense orientation in lambda ZAPII vectors (Stratagene,
La Jolla), allowing expression of β -galactosidase fusion

proteins (Huse et al., 1988). These libraries were screened using antiserum raised against Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.

Alternatively, the synthesized cDNA fractions were subjected to PCR-screening using cutinase specific primers (see table 2). These primers were derived from comparison of the amino acid sequence of several fungal Cutinase genes (Ettinger et al., 1987). The conditions for the PCR reaction were optimized for each set of primers, using cDNA from Fusarium solani pisi cutinase as a control. For those preparations of cDNA with which a specific PCR fragment could be generated with a length that is similar to (or greater than) the length of the PCR fragment generated with the cDNA from Fusarium solani pisi cutinase under identical conditions, the PCR fragment was purified by gel electroforesis and isolated from the gel.

As an alternative approach, the PCR screening technique using Cutinase specific primers was also applied directly to genomic DNA of some fungal strains, using genomic DNA of Fusarium solani pisi as a positive control. For those preparations of fungal genomic DNA with which a specific PCR fragment could be generated with a length that is similar to (or greater than) the length of the PCR fragment generated with the cDNA from Fusarium solani pisi cutinase under identical conditions, the PCR fragment was purified by gel electroforesis and isolated from the gel.

For strains which scored positive in either the expression library approach or the PCR screening approach (either with cDNA or genomic DNA) as well as a number of other strains, high molecular weight genomic DNA was isolated. Strains were grown essentially as described by Ettinger et al. (1987), and genomic DNA was isolated as described by de Graaff et al. (1988). Genomic DNA was digested with various restriction enzymes and analyzed by Southern hybridization using either the analogous cDNA insert (expression library approach) or the PCR fragment (PCR screening approach) or the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase gene (other strains) as a probe, and a physical map of the cutinase genes was constructed. An appropriate digest of

genomic DNA was size-fractionated by gel electroforesis and fragments of the appropriate size were isolated from the gel and subcloned in pUC19. These genomic libraries were screened with the corresponding cDNA insert (expression library approach) or the PCR fragment (PCR screening approach), yielding clones comprising the genomic copy of the cutinase genes. These genes were sequenced in both directions. Introns were identified by sequencing the corresponding cDNA or by comparison with other Cutinase sequences (Ettinger et al., 1987). The N-terminal end of the mature cutinase polypeptide was also deduced from such a comparison. Using standard PCR techniques, the introns were removed, a HindIII site was engineered immediately downstream of the open reading frames and the coding sequence for the pre-sequence of the Saccharomyces cerevisiae invertase gene (preceded by a SacI site, compare cassette 8, Fig. 3) was fused to the sequences encoding the N-terminus of the mature cutinases. The obtained SacI-HindIII fragments comprising the cutinase genes operably linked to the sequence encoding the S. cerevisiae invertase pre-sequence were ligated with the 7.3 kb SacI-HindIII fragment of pUR7241 (see Fig. 4) and transformed to S. cerevisiae strain SU51. The fungal cutinases were expressed and recovered from the culture broth essentially as described in Example 4.

25

EXAMPLE 9

The compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi Cutinase variants R17E, R196E and R17E+R196E to various anionic surfactants.

The compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and of the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase variants R17E, R196E and R17E+R196E to various anionic surfactants was tested as follows. Solutions of the enzyme in various detergent products were prepared. The solutions were incubated at 40°C and at intervals samples were taken. Then the enzyme activity was determined following the assay described in Example 4. The following detergent products A-C were used:

Product A

	compound	weight %
	Na-Linear alkyl benzene sulphonate	11.7
	Nonionic surfactant 7EO	5.8
5	Nonionic surfactant 3EO	3.2
	Zeolite	38.8
	Sokolan CP7	4.8
	Sodium CMC	0.8
	Sodium carbonate	13.9
10	Sodium perborate	8.0
	TAED	5.4
	Sodium silicate	2.5

Product B

15	compound	weight %
	Sodium Primary Alkyl Sulphate	6.5
	Nonionic surfactant 7EO	6.5
	Nonionic surfactant 3EO	8.3
	Soap	2.3
20	Zeolite	38.0
	Sodium carbonate	15.9
	Sodium perborate	8.0
	TAED	5.4
	Sodium silicate	2.5

Product C

	compound	weight %
	Na-Linear alkyl benzene sulphonate	6.9
	Nonionic surfactant	10.0
5	Soap	2.0
	Zeolite	27.0
	Sodium carbonate	10.2

The results for the compositions A-C are given in Figure 12-14. It follows that, in particular in the anionic-rich composition A, the Cutinase variants are more stable than wildtype Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.

EXAMPLE 10

15 The compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi Cutinase variants R196K and R196L to Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate (SDS).

The compatibility of Fusarium solani pisi cutinase and of the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase variants R196K and R196L to Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate (SDS) was tested as follows. Solutions of the enzymes in 0.4 mM SDS and 10 mM Tris at 0°FH were prepared. The solutions were incubated at 40°C and at intervals samples were taken and the residual enzyme activity was determined following the assay described in Example 4. The results are shown in Figure 15. It can be seen that both Cutinase variants are more stable to the anionic surfactant Sodium Dodecyl Sulphate (SDS) than wildtype Fusarium solani pisi cutinase.

EXAMPLE 11

30 Determining the In-the-wash activity of Fusarium solani pisi Cutinase variant R17E.

Test cloths made of woven polyester/cotton were soiled with pure olive oil. Each tests cloth was then incubated in 30 ml wash liquor in a 100 ml polystyrene bottle. The bottles were agitated in a Miele TMT washing

machine filled with water and using a normal 40°C main wash programme. The wash liquor consisted of 2 grams per litre (at 27°FH) of washing powders A and B of Example 9.

The results are shown in Figure 16. The enhancement
5 of the in-the-wash performance (oily soil removal) of
Cutinase varaiant R17E relative to wild-type Fusarium solani
pisi cutinase under various wash conditions is evident. For
comparison, the same experiments were also carried out with
Lipolase (TM). Under all conditions, the Cutinase variant
10 R17E was superior.

CLAIMS

1. A Cutinase variant of a parent Cutinase, wherein the amino acid sequence has been modified in such way that the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved.
2. A Cutinase variant according to Claim 1, in which the compatibility to anionic surfactants has been improved by reducing the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme.
3. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, in which the binding of anionic surfactants to the enzyme has been reduced by reducing the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme.
4. A Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme is reduced by replacing one or more positively charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolair tail of the anionic surfactant, by lysine residues.
5. A Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme is reduced by replacing one or more positively charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolair tail of the anionic surfactant, by uncharged amino acid residues.
6. A Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the electrostatic interaction between the anionic surfactant and the enzyme is reduced by replacing one or more positively charged arginine residues which are located close to a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolair tail of the anionic surfactant, by negatively charged amino acid residues.

7. A Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1-3, wherein the binding of the anionic surfactant and the enzyme is reduced by replacing one or more amino acid residues which are located in a hydrophobic patch capable of binding the apolair tail of the anionic surfactant, by less hydrophobic amino acid residues.

8. A Cutinase variant according to Claim 7, in which the less hydrophobic amino acid residues are selected from the group consisting of glycine, serine, alanine, aspartic acid and threonine.

9. A Cutinase variant according to any of the preceding Claims, wherein the parent Cutinase is an eukaryotic Cutinase.

10. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, in which the parent enzyme is a Cutinase which is immunologically cross-reacting with antibodies raised against the cutinase from Fusarium solani pisi.

11. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, encoded by genes that have extensive homology to the 5'- and/or 3' ends of to the genes encoding cutinase from Fusarium solani pisi, Colletotrichum capsici, Colletotrichum gloeosporioides, Magnaporthe grisiea and/or to conserved sequences in Cutinases.

12. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, in which the modified residues are located at one or more of the following positions in the amino acid sequence of the Fusarium solani pisi cutinase, or the corresponding amino acids of a different Cutinase: 17, 51, 78, 80, 88, 96, 156, 195 and 196.

13. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, whereby the modified residues are located in the hydrophobic patch around amino acids 51 and 195 of the

Fusarium solani pisi cutinase, or the corresponding amino acids of a different Cutinase.

14. A Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, which is a variant of Magnoportha grisiea cutinase and comprises one or more of the following mutations: A80D, A88E, R156L.

15. A process for producing a Cutinase variant according to any one of the preceding Claims, which comprises the steps of fermentatively cultivating an rDNA modified microorganism containing a gene made by rDNA technique which encodes the Cutinase variant, making a preparation of the Cutinase variant by separating the Cutinase variant produced by the micro-organism either from the fermentation broth, or by separating the cells of the micro-organism from the fermentation broth, disintegrating the separated cells and concentrating or part purifying the Cutinase either from said broth or from said cells by physical or chemical concentration or purification methods.

16. A rDNA modified micro-organism which has been transformed by a rDNA vector carrying a gene encoding a Cutinase variant according to any of Claims 1 to 14 and which is thereby able to express said Cutinase variant.

17. A rDNA modified micro-organism according to Claim 16 carrying a gene encoding a Cutinase variant that is introduced into the micro-organism by fusion at its 5'-end to a gene fragment encoding a (modified) pre-sequence functional as a signal- or secretion-sequence for the host organism.

18. A rDNA modified micro-organism according to Claims 16 or 17, wherein the host organism is a eukaryote, for example a yeast of the genus Saccharomyces or Kluyveromyces or the genus Hansenula, or a fungus of the genus Aspergillus.

19. An rDNA modified micro-organism according to Claims 16 to 18, carrying a recombinant DNA vector coding for a Cutinase variant according to any of Claims 1 - 14, said micro-organism having being made an auxotrophic mutant by gene replacement of the gene coding for the auxotrophic marker in one of its ancestor cells.

20. A polynucleotide having a base sequence that encodes the mature Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1 - 14 or a functional equivalent or a mutant thereof, in which polynucleotide the final translated codon is followed by a stop codon and optionally having nucleotide sequences coding for the pre-sequence of this Cutinase directly upstream of the nucleotide sequences coding for the mature enzyme.

21. A polynucleotide having a base sequence encoding a Cutinase variant according to any of Claims 1 - 14, in which polynucleotide the final translated codon is followed by a stop codon and optionally having a nucleotide sequence coding for at least a part of the corresponding presequence, and/or a signal- or secretion-sequence suitable for a selected host organism, directly upstream of the nucleotide sequence coding for the mature enzyme.

22. A polynucleotide having a base sequence that encodes the mature Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1 - 14, or a functional equivalent or mutant thereof, in which the Cutinase-variant encoding nucleotide sequence derived from the organism of origin has been modified in such a way that at least one codon, and preferably as many codons as possible, have been made the subject of 'silent' mutations to form codons encoding equivalent amino acid residues and being codons preferred by a new host as specified in one of Claims 16 to 19, thereby to provide in use within the cells of such host a messenger-RNA for the introduced gene of improved stability.

23. A polynucleotide according to any one of Claims 20 to 22, in which upstream of the nucleotide sequences coding for the pro-or mature Cutinase variant, there is located a nucleotide sequence that codes for a signal or secretion sequence suitable for a host as specified in any one of Claims 16 to 19.

23. A recombinant DNA vector able to direct the expression of a nucleotide sequence encoding a Cutinase variant gene, comprising the following components:

- (a) Double-stranded (ds) DNA coding for the mature Cutinase variant or precutinase or a corresponding precutinase in which at least part of the presequence has been removed directly down stream of a secretion signal (preferred for the selected host cell), provided that where the part of the gene that should be translated does not start with the codon ATG, an ATG codon should be placed in front, and provided also that the part of the gene to be translated ends with an appropriate stop codon or has such codon added;
- (b) An expression regulon (suitable for the selected host organism) situated upstream of the plus strand of the ds DNA encoding the Cutinase variant (component (a));
- (c) A terminator sequence (suitable for the selected host organism) situated down stream of the plus strand of the ds DNA encoding the Cutinase variant (component (a));
- (d1) Nucleotide sequences which facilitate integration, of the ds DNA into the genome of the selected host or,
- (d2) an origin of replication suitable for the selected host;
- (e1) Optionally a (auxotrophic) selection marker;
- (e2) Optionally a ds DNA sequence encoding proteins involved in the maturation and/or secretion of one of the precursor forms of the Cutinase variant in the host selected.

25. A recombinant DNA vector according to Claim 24, also carrying, upstream and/or downstream of the polynucleotide as earlier defined, further sequences facilitative of functional expression of the Cutinase.

26. A recombinant DNA vector according to any one of Claims 24 to 25, carrying an auxotrophic marker consisting of a coding region of the auxotrophic marker and a defective promotor region.

27. An enzymatic detergent composition comprising a Cutinase variant according to any one of Claims 1 to 14.

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Fig.1A.

SYNTHETIC OLIGONULEOTIDES USED TO CONSTRUCT CASSETTE I

CODE	Length	5' <---	sequence	---> 3'
CUTI1A IG	(44)	aat tcg agc tca tca	TGA AAT TCT TCG CGT	
		TAA CCA CAC TTC TC		
CUTI1B IG	(39)	GCC GCC ACG GCT TCG	GCT CTG CCT ACT AGT	
		AAC CCT GCT		
CUTI1C IG	(42)	CAG GAG CTT GAG GCG	CGC CAG CTT GGT AGA	
		ACA ACT CGC GAC		
CUTI1D IG	(39)	GAT CTG ATC AAC GGC	AAT AGC GCT TCC TGC	
		GCC GAT GTC		
CUTI1E IG	(33)	ATC TTC ATT TAT GCT	CGA GGT TCA ACA GAG	
		ACG		
CUTI1F IG	(28)	GGC AAC TTG GGA	ACT CTC GGG CCC AGC A	
CUTI1G IG	(31)	GGT TAA CGC GAA	GAA TTT CAT gat gag ctc	
		g		
CUTI1H IG	(39)	ACT AGT AGG CAG AGC	CGA AGC CGT GGC GGC	
		GAG AAG TGT		
CUTI1I IG	(42)	TGT TCT ACC AAG CTG	GCG CGC CTC AAG CTC	
		CTG AGC AGG GTT		
CUTI1J IG	(39)	GCA GGA AGC GCT ATT	GCC GTT GAT CAG ATC	
		GTC GCG AGT		
CUTI1K IG	(33)	TGA ACC TCG AGC ATA	AAT GAA GAT GAC ATC	
		GGC		
CUTI1L IG	(41)	AGC TTG CTG GGC	CCG AGA GTT CCC AAG TTG	
		CCC GTC TCT GT		

```

      10      20      30      40      50      60
      aattcg agctcatcAT GAAATTCTTC GCGTTAACCA CACTTCTCGC
      gc tcgagtagTA CTTTAAGAAG CGCAATTGGT GTGAAGAGCG

      70      80      90      100      110      120
CGCCACGGCT TCGGCTCTGC CTACTAGTAA CCCTGCTCAG GAGCTTGAGG CGCGCCAGCT
GCGGTGCCGA AGCCGAGACG GATGATCAATT GGGACGAGTC CTCGAACTCC GCGCGGTCGA

      130      140      150      160      170      180
TGGTAGAACA ACTCGCGACG ATCTGATCAA CGGCAATAGC GCTTCCTGCG CCGATGTGAT
ACCATCTTGT TGAGCGCTGC TAGACTAGTT GCCGTTATCG CGAAGGACGC GGCTACAGTA

      190      200      210      220      230      240
CTTCATTTAT GCTCGAGGTT CAACAGAGAC GGGCAACTTG GGAACTCTCG GGCCAGCA
GAAGTAAATA CGAGCTCCAA GTTGTCTCTG CCCGTTGAAC CCTTGAGAGC CCGGGTCGTT

250

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CGA

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Fig.1B.

SYNTHETIC OLIGONULEOTIDES USED TO CONSTRUCT CASSETTE 2

CODE	Length	5' <---	sequence	---> 3'
CUTI2A MH	(40)	AAT TCT CGG GCC CAG CAT TGC CTC CAA CCT		
		TGA GTC CGC C		
CUTI2B MH	(36)	TTC GGC AAG GAC GGT GTC TGG ATT CAG GGC		
		GTT GGC		
CUTI2C MH	(36)	GGT GCC TAC CGA GCC ACC CTA GGA GAC AAT		
		GCT CTC		
CUTI2D MH	(39)	CCG CGG GGA ACC TCT AGC GCC GCA ATC AGG		
		GAG ATG CTA		
CUTI2E MH	(45)	GGC CTC TTC CAG CAG GCC AAC ACC AAG TGC		
		CCT GAC GCG ACT TTG		
CUTI2F MH	(46)	ATC GCC GGT GGC TAC AGC CAG GGT GCT GCA		
		CTT GCA GCC GCT AGC A		
CUTI2G MH	(45)	CTT GCC GAA GGC GGA CTC AAG GTT GGA GGC		
		AAT GCT GGG CCC GAG		
CUTI2H MH	(36)	GTA GGC ACC GCC AAC GCC CTG AAT CCA GAC		
		ACC GTC		
CUTI2I MH	(36)	TCC CCG CGG GAG AGC ATT GTC TCC TAG GGT		
		GGC TCG		
CUTI2J MH	(39)	GAA GAG GCC TAG CAT CTC CCT GAT TGC GGC		
		GCT AGA GGT		
CUTI2K MH	(45)	ACC GGC GAT CAA AGT CGC GTC AGG GCA CTT		
		GGT GTT GGC CTG CTG		
CUTI2L MH	(41)	AGC TTG CTA GCG GCT GCA AGT GCA GCA CCC		
		TGG CTG TAG CC		

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      10      20      30      40      50      60
AATTCTC GGGCCCAGCA TTGCCTCCAA CCTTGAGTCC GCCTTCGGCA AGGACGGTGT
GAG CCCGGGTCGT AACGGAGGTT GGAATCAGG CGGAAGCCGT TCTGCCACA

      70      80      90     100     110     120
CTGGATTGAG GCGGTTGGCG GTGCCTACCG AGCCACCCTA GGAGACAATG CTCTCCCGCG
GACCTAAGTC CCGCAACCGC CACGGATGCG TCGGTGGGAT CCTCTGTTAC GAGAGGGCGC

      130     140     150     160     170     180
GGGAACCTCT AGCGCCGCAA TCAGGGAGAT GCTAGGCCTC TTCCAGCAGG CCAACACCAA
CCCTTGGAGA TCGCGGCGTT AGTCCCTCTA CGATCCGGAG AAGGTCGTCC GGTGTGTGTT

      190     200     210     220     230     240
GTGCCCTGAC GCGACTTTGA TCGCCGGTGG CTACAGCCAG GGTGCTGCAC TTGCAGCCGC
CACGGGACTG CGCTGAAACT AGCGGCCACC GATGTCGGTC CCACGACGTG AACGTCGGCG

      250
TAGCA
ATCGTTCGA

```

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Fig.1C.

SYNTHETIC OLIGONULEOTIDES USED TO CONSTRUCT CASSETTE 3

CODE	Length	5' <---	sequence	---> 3'
CUTI3A MH (43)		AAT TCC CGC TAG CAT CGA GGA CCT CGA CTC		
		GGC CAT TCG TGA C		
CUTI3B MH (45)		AAG ATC GCC GGT ACC GTT CTG TTC GGC TAC		
		ACC AAG AAC CTA CAG		
CUTI3C1 MH (42)		AAT CGC GGC CGA ATC CCC AAC TAC CCT GCC		
		GAC AGG ACC AAG		
CUTI3D MH (42)		GTC TTC TGC AAT ACA GGA GAT CTC GTT TGT		
		ACT GGT AGC TTG		
CUTI3E MH (39)		ATC GTT GCT GCA CCT CAC TTG GCA TAT GGT		
		CCT GAT GCC		
CUTI3F MH (33)		CGG GGA CCT GCC CCT GAG TTC CTC ATC GAG		
		AAG		
CUTI3G1 MH (32)		GTT CGG GCT GTC CGT GGT TCT GCT TGA gct		
		ta		
CUTI3H MH (30)		GGC CGA GTC GAG GTC CTC GAT GCT AGC GGC		
CUTI3I MH (45)		CTT GGT GTA GCC GAA CAG AAC GGT ACC GGC		
		GAT CTT GTC ACG AAT		
CUTI3J1 MH (42)		GTC GGC AGG GTA GTT GGG GAT TCG GCC GCG		
		ATT CTG TAG GTT		
CUTI3K MH (42)		AGT ACA AAC GAG ATC TCC TGT ATT GCA GAA		
		GAC CTT GGT CCT		
CUTI3L MH (39)		ACC ATA TGC CAA GTG AGG TGC AGC AAC GAT		
		CAA GCT ACC		
CUTI3M MH (33)		GAG GAA CTC AGG GGC AGG TCC CCG GGC ATC		
		AGG		
CUTI3N1 MH (45)		agc tta agc TCA AGC AGA ACC ACG GAC AGC		
		CCG AAC CTT CTC GAT		

```

      10          20          30          40          50          60
AATTCCCGC TAGCATCGAG GACCTCGACT CGGCCATTTCG TGACAAGATC GCCGGTACCG
GGGCG ATCGTAGCTC CTGGAGCTGA GCCGCTAAGC ACTGTTCTAG CGGCCATGGC

      70          80          90          100          110          120
TTCTGTTTCGG CTACACCAAG AACCTACAGA ATCGCGGCCG AATCCCCAAC TACCCTGCCG
AAGACAAGCC GATGTGCTTC TTGGATGTCT TAGCGCCGGC TTAGGGGTTG ATGGGACGGC

      130          140          150          160          170          180
ACAGGACCAA GGTCTTCTGC AATACAGGAG ATCTCGTTTG TACTGGTAGC TTGATCGTTG
TGTCCTGGTT CCAGAAGACG TTATGTCCTC TAGAGCAAAC ATGACCATCG AACTAGCAAC

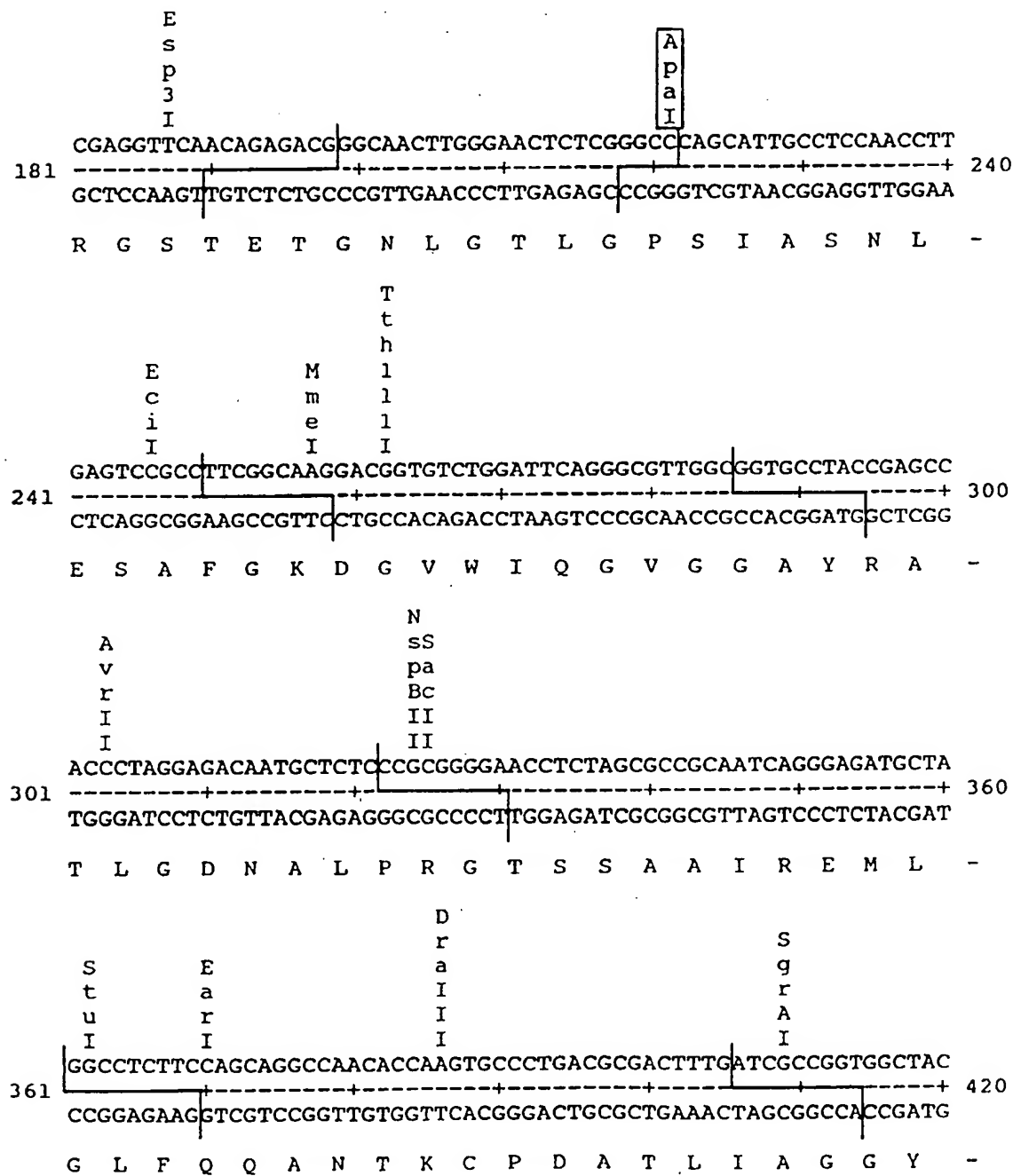
      190          200          210          220          230          240
CTGCACCTCA CTTGGCATAT GGTCTTGATG CCGGGGGACC TGCCCCTGAG TTCCTCATCG
GACGTGGAGT GAACCGTATA CCAGGACTAC GGGCCCCTGG ACGGGGACTC AAGGAGTAGC

      250          260          270          280
AGAAGTTTCG GGCTGTCCGT GGTCTTGCTT GAgctta
TCTTCCAAGC CCGACAGGCA CCAAGACGAA CTcgaattcg a

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Fig.1D(2 of 4)

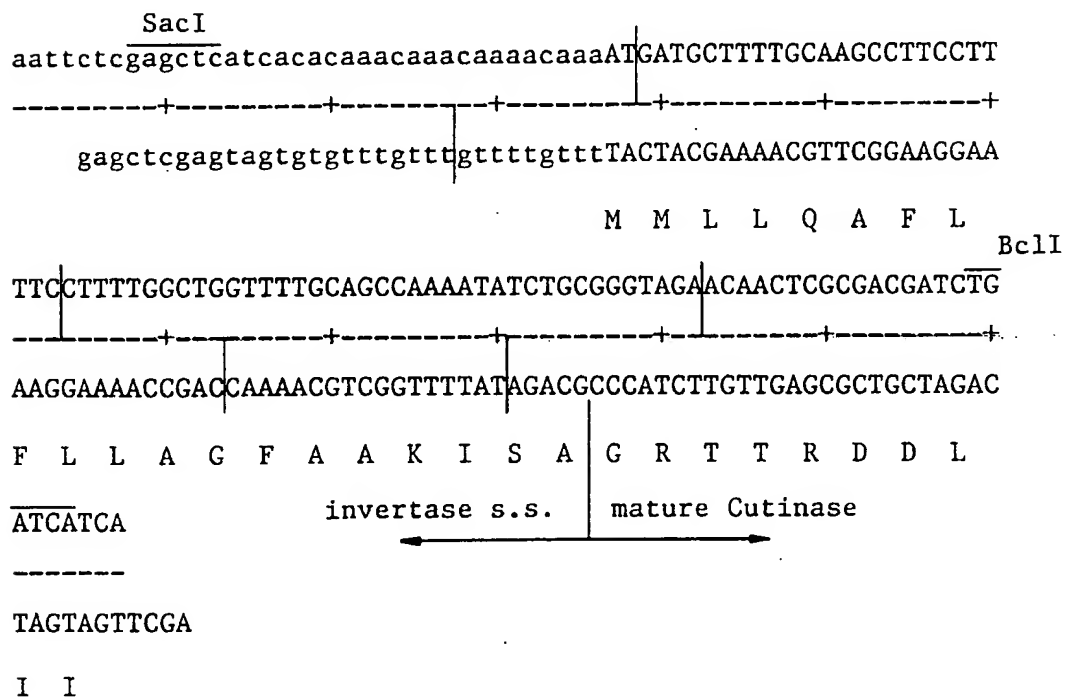


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Fig. 3.

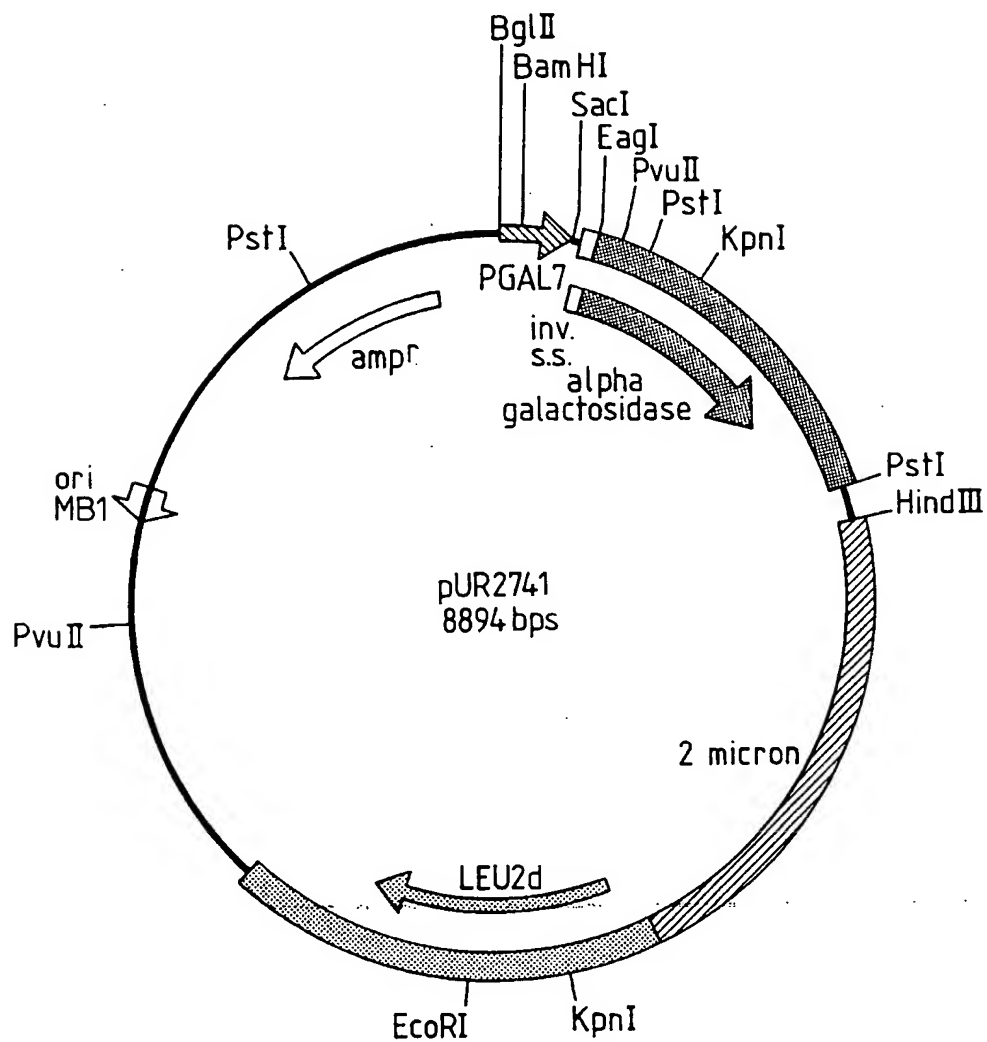
SYNTHETIC OLIGONULEOTIDES USED TO CONSTRUCT CASSETTE 8

CODE	Length	5' <--- sequence ---> 3'
		SacI
AC 01 cv	(38)	AAT TCT CGA GCT CAT CAC ACA AAC AAA CAA AAC AAA AT
AC 02 CV	(25)	GAT GCT TTT GCA AGC CTT CCT TTT C
AC 03 CV	(39)	CTT TTG GCT GGT TTT GCA GCC AAA ATA TCT GCG GGT AGA
		BclI
AC 04 CV	(25)	ACA ACT CGC GAC GAT CTG ATC ATC A
AC 05 CV	(41)	AGC TTG ATG ATC AGA TCG TCG CGA GTT GTT CTA CCC GCA GA
AC 06 CV	(17)	TAT TTT GGC TGC AAA AC
AC 07 CV	(46)	CAG CCA AAA GGA AAA GGA AGG CTT GCA AAA GCA TCA TTT TGT TTT G
AC 08 CV	(23)	TTT GTT TGT GTG ATG AGC TCG AG

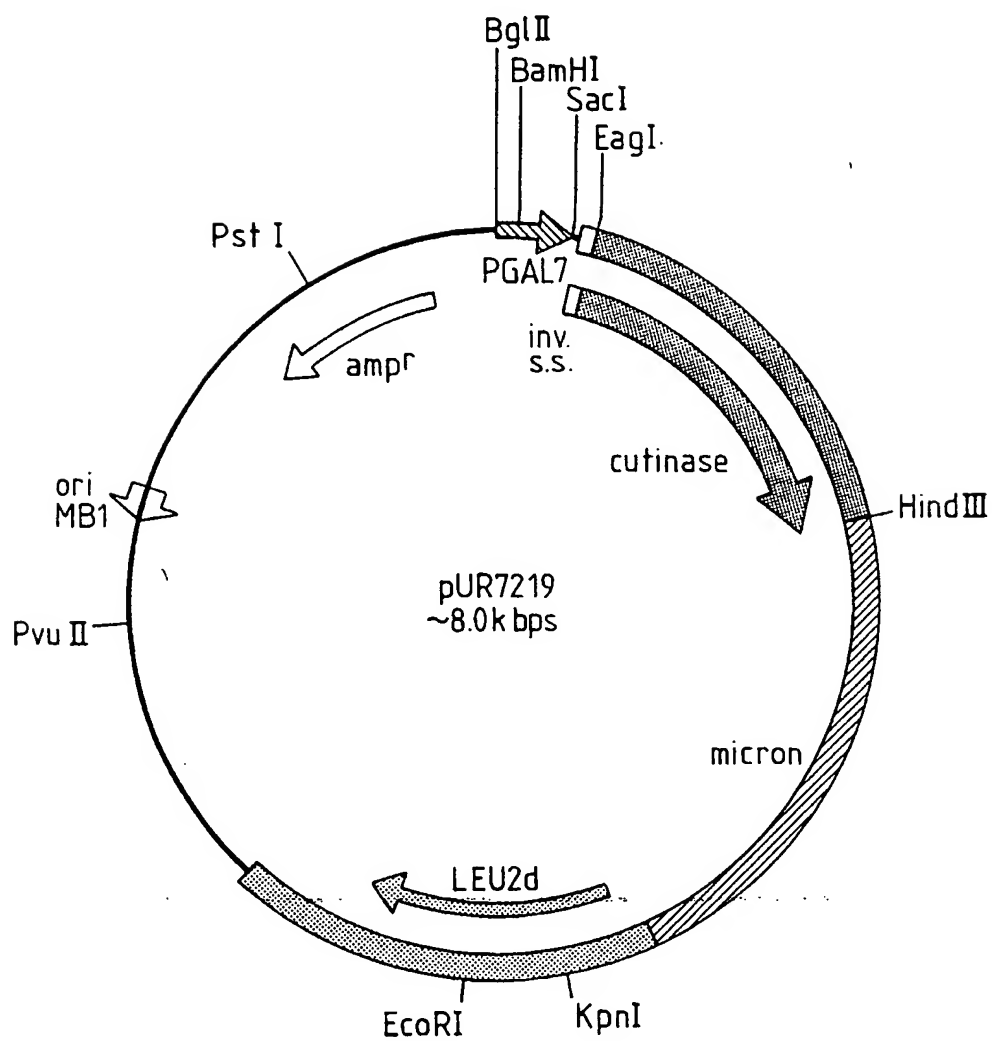


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Fig.4.



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Fig. 5.

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Fig. 6.

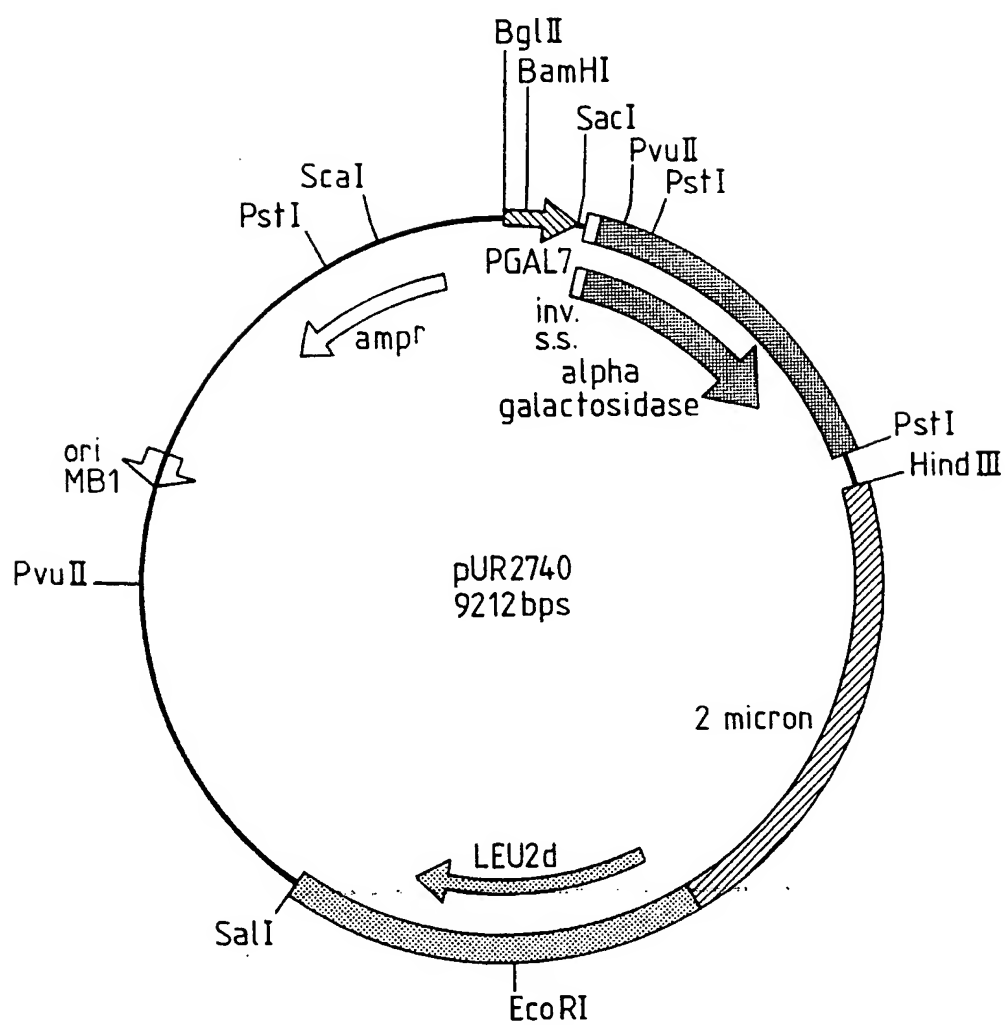
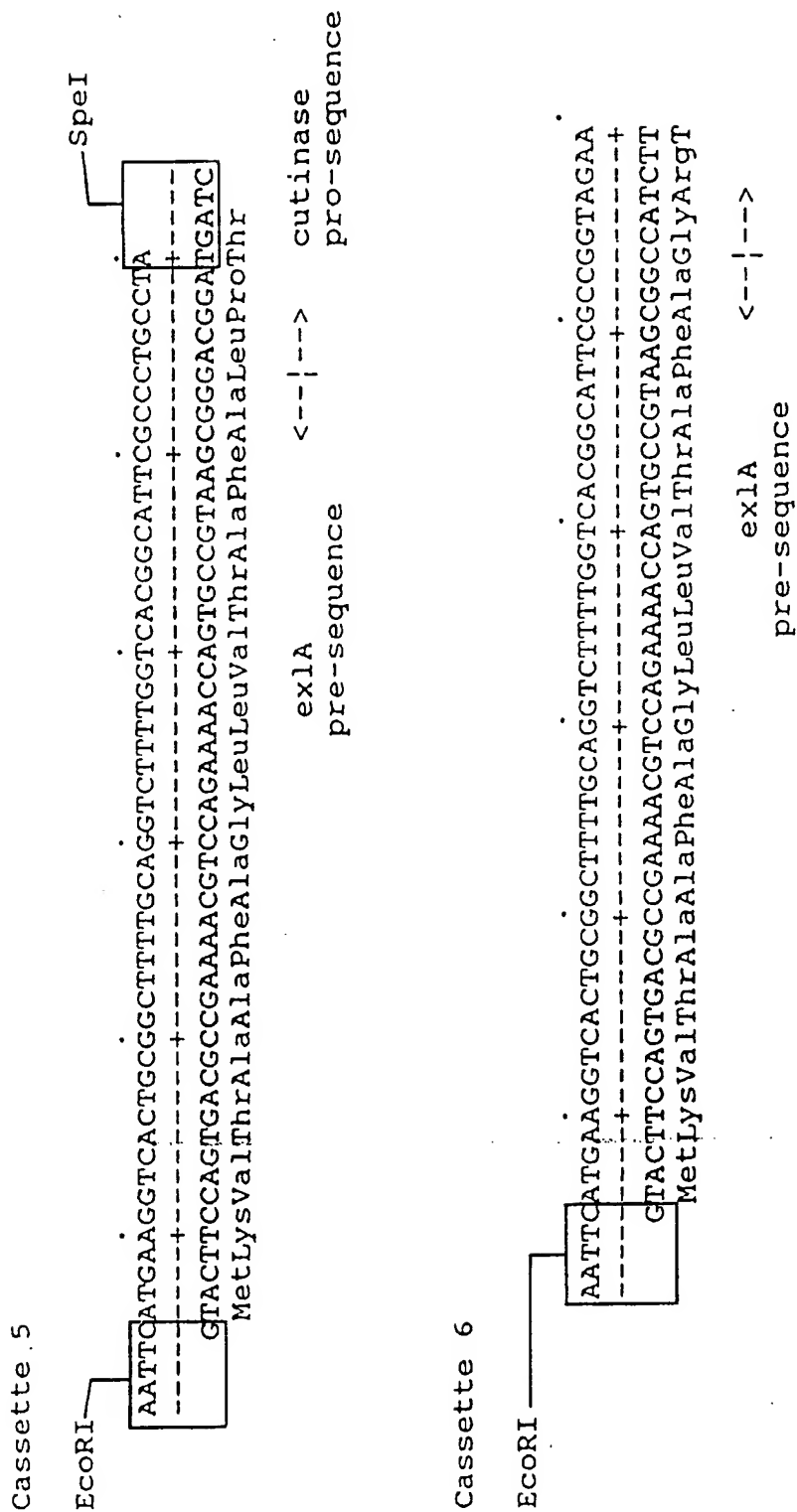


Fig. 7.



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Fig. 7(Cont).

CAACTCGCGACGATCT
-----+
GTTGAGCGCTGCTAGACTAG
hrThrArgAspAspLeuile
mature cutinase

Cassette 7

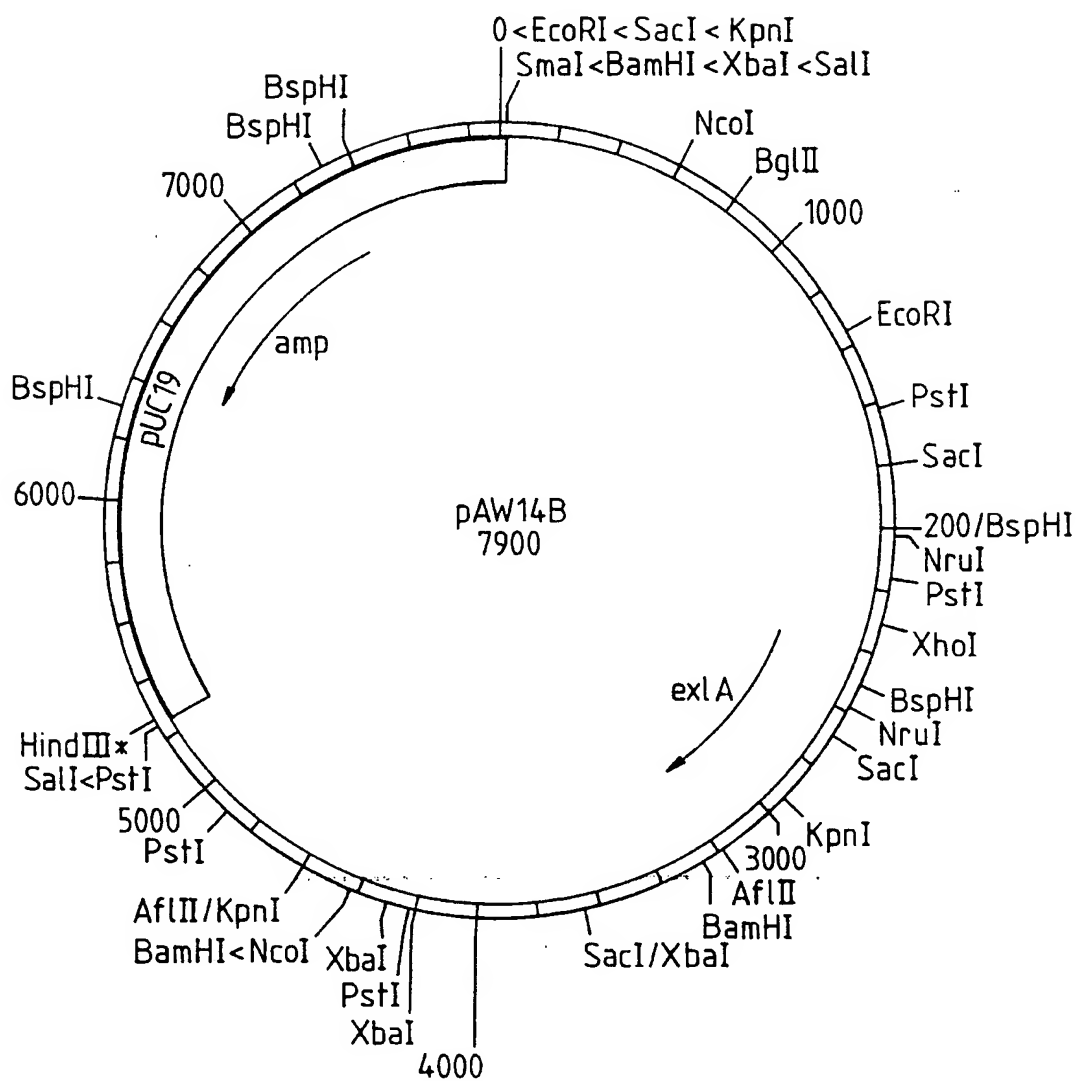
EcoRI

AATTCAATGAAGGTCACTGCGGCTTTTGCAGGTCTTTTGGTCAAGGCATTCCGCTCAAGAA
-----+
GTAATTCCAGTGACGCGCGAAACCGTCCAGAAAACCCAGTGCCCGTAAGCGGAGTTCTT
MetLysvalThrAlaAlaPheAlaGlyLeuLeuValThrAlaPheAlaSerArgT
ex1A
pre-sequence

CAACTCGCGACGATCT
-----+
GTTGAGCGCTGCTAGACTAG
hrThrArgAspAspLeuile
mature cutinase

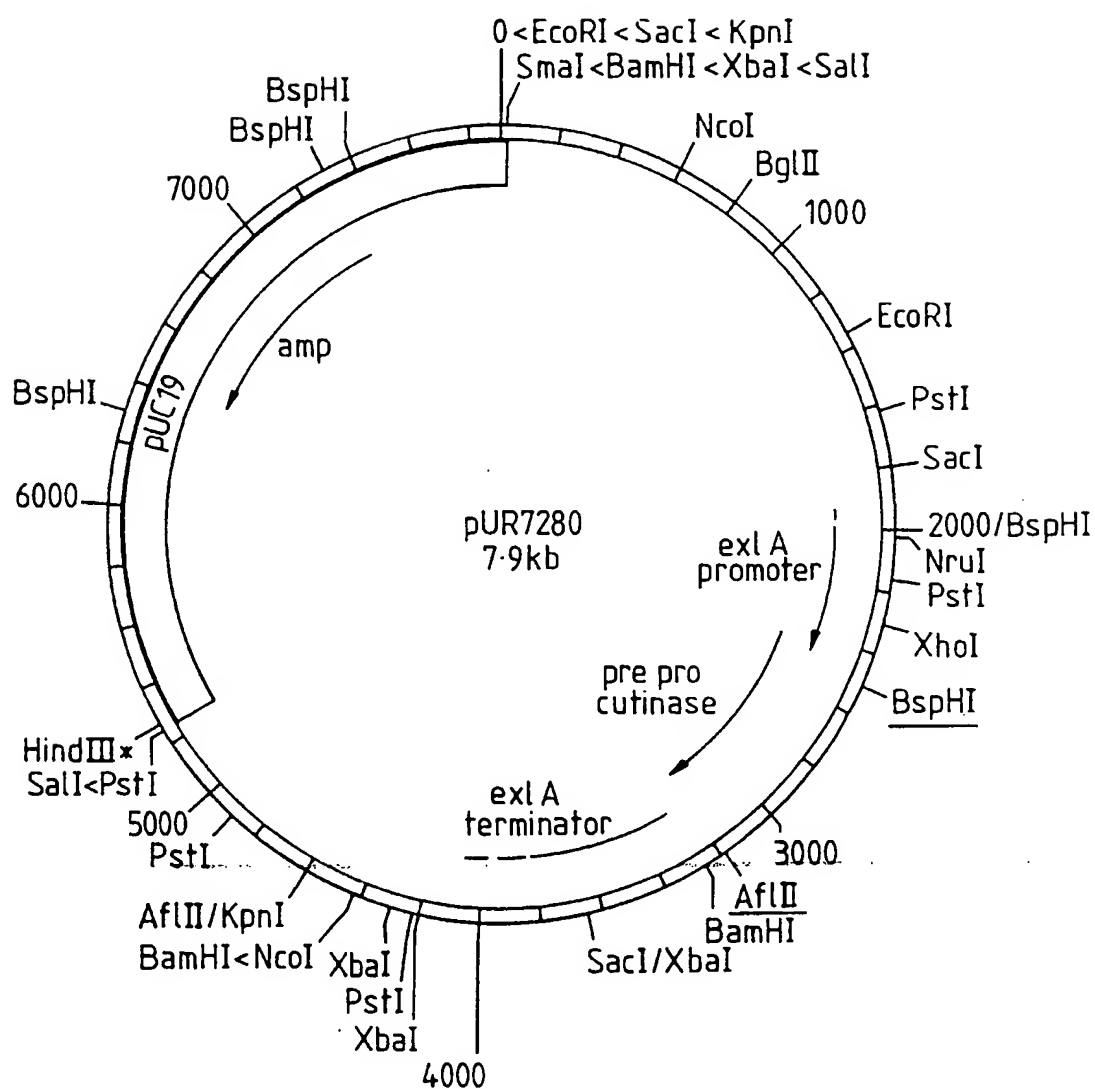
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Fig. 8.



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Fig. 9.



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Fig.10.

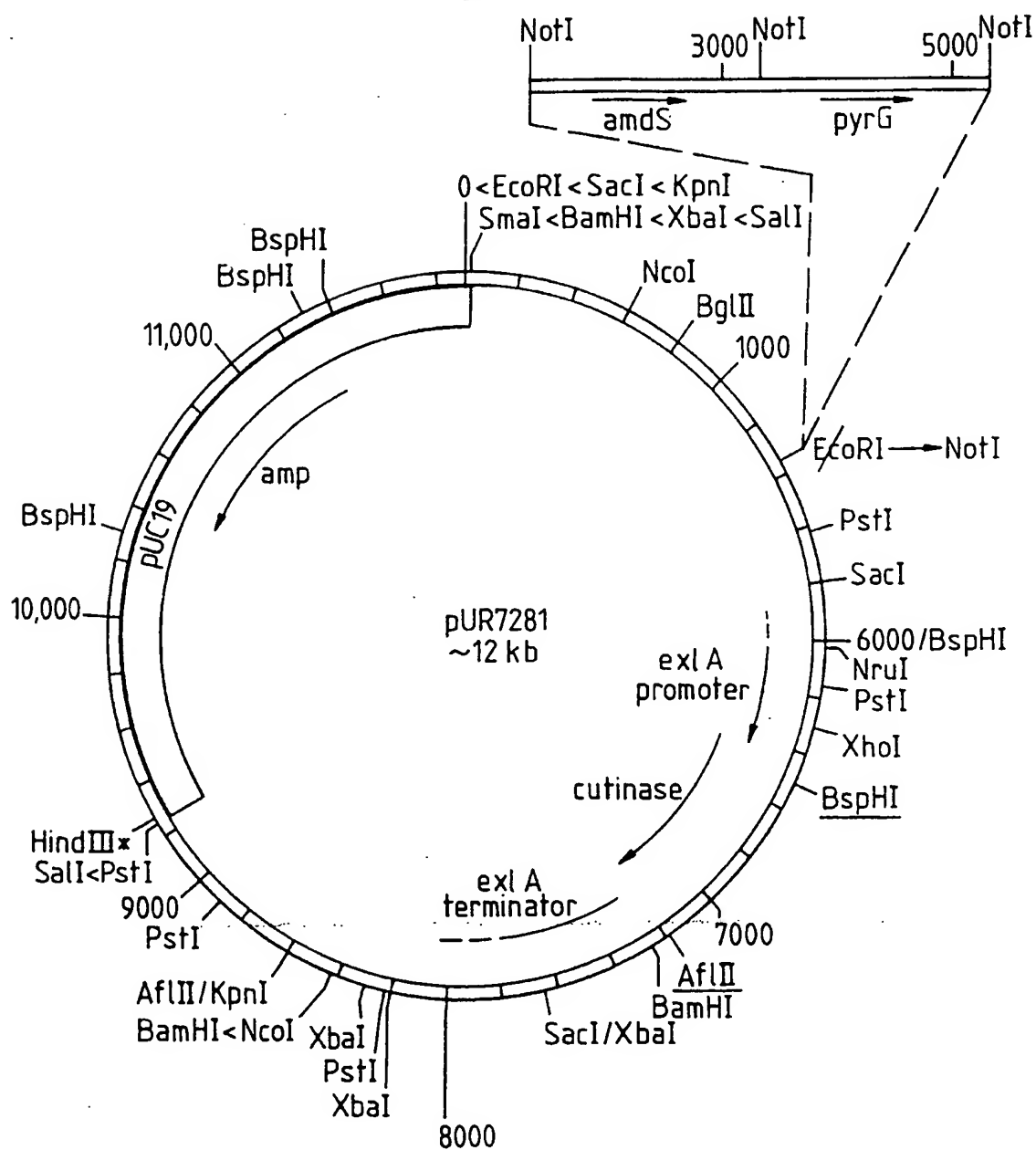


Fig. 11.

	20				40				60			
fsol	GRTT	RD	DLING	NSASCAD	VI	FIY	AR	GSTET	GNLG-	T	LGPS	IASN
cglo	QSST	RN	ELETG	SSSACPK	VI	YIF	AR	ASTEP	GNMGI	S	AGPI	VADA
ccap	QSST	RN	ELESG	SSSNCPK	VI	YIF	AR	ASTEP	GNMGI	S	AGPI	VADA
mgri	LNSV	RN	DLISG	NAAACPS	VI	LIF	AR	ASGEV	GNMGL	S	AGTN	VASR
												LEREF-

	80				100			
fsol	K	DG	VW	IQG	RAT	LGDNA	L-PRGTS	SAAIRE
cglo	A	NN	VW	VQG	LAD	LASN	L-PDGTS	SAAINE
ccap	A	SQ	VW	VQG	SAD	LASN	I IPEGTS	RVAINE
mgri	R	ND	IW	VQG	DAA	LSPNF	L-PAGTT	QGAIDE
								MLGL
								ARRL
								AKRL
								AKRM
								FTLAN
								TKCPDA
								TKCPNA
								TKCPNS
								TKCPNA

	120				140				160			
fsol	LI	A	GGY	SQ	GAALAA	SIEDL	DSAIRDKIA	GT	VLF	GYTKNLQNR	GRIP	NYP
cglo	IV	S	GGY	SQ	GTAVMAG	SISGL	STTIKNQIK	GV	VLF	GYTKNLQNL	GRIP	NFE
ccap	VV	A	GGY	SQ	GTAVMAS	SISEL	SSTIQNQIK	GV	VLS	AITKNLQNL	GRIP	NFS
mgri	VV	A	GGY	SQ	GTAVMEN	AVSEM	PAAVQDQIK	GV	VLF	GYTKNLQNR	GRIP	DFP

	180				200			
fsol	ADRT	KVF	CN	TGDLV	C	TGSLIVAAPHL	AYG	PDARGP
cglo	TSKT	EVY	CD	IADAV	C	YGTLFILPAHF	LYQ	TDRAVA
ccap	TSKT	EVY	CA	LADAV	C	YGTLFILPAHF	LYQ	ADRAATS
mgri	TEKT	EVY	CN	ASDAV	C	FGTLFLLPAHF	LYT	TESSIA
								APNWL
								IRQI
								RAA----
								RAVGRS
								IEKV
								QARI
								AAARI
								AAARI
								IRQI
								RAA----

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Fig. 12.

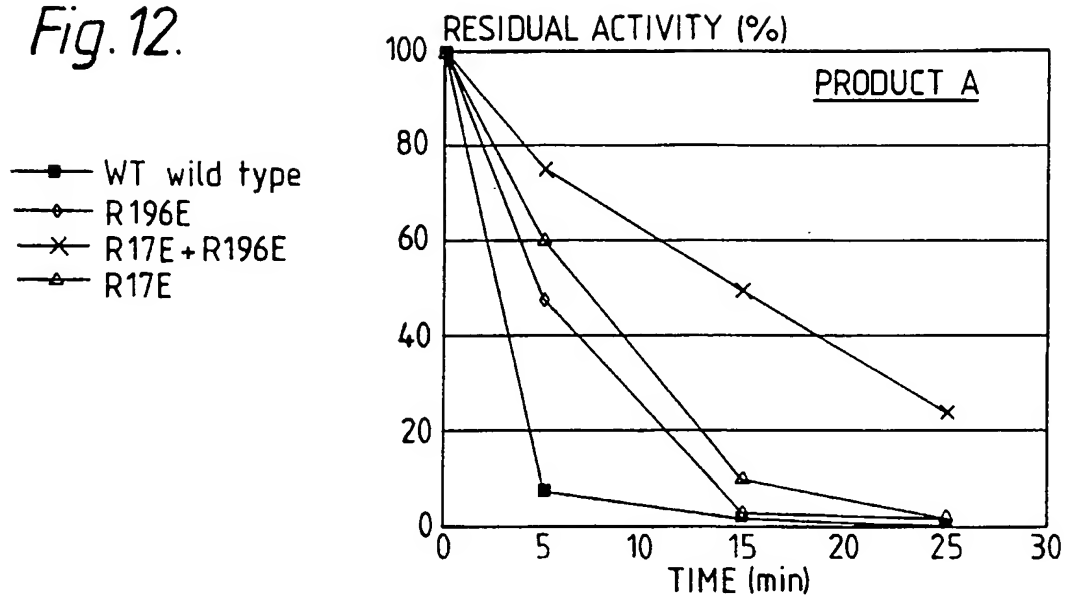
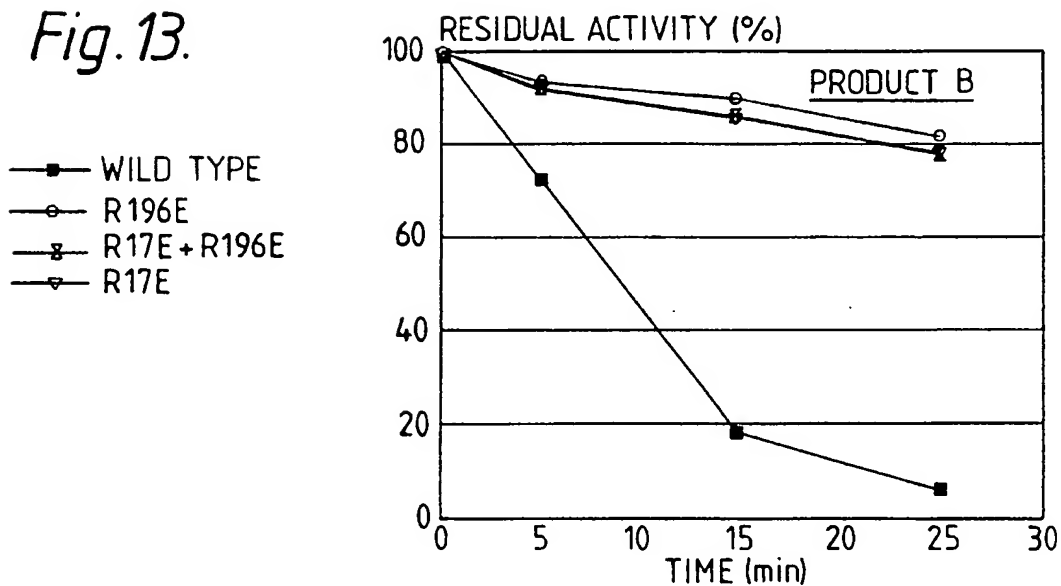


Fig. 13.



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Fig. 14.

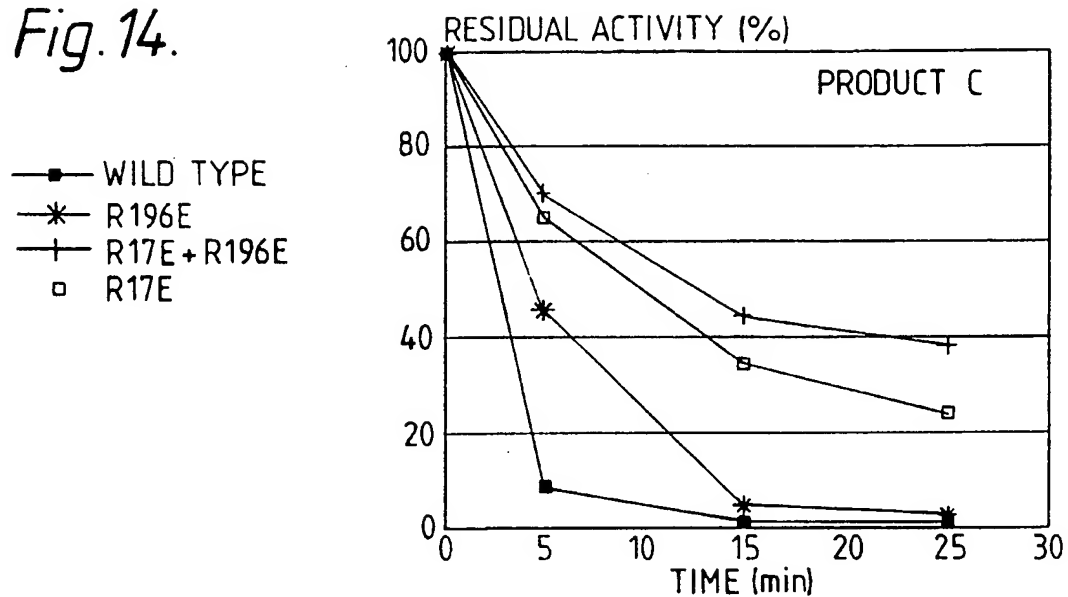


Fig. 15.

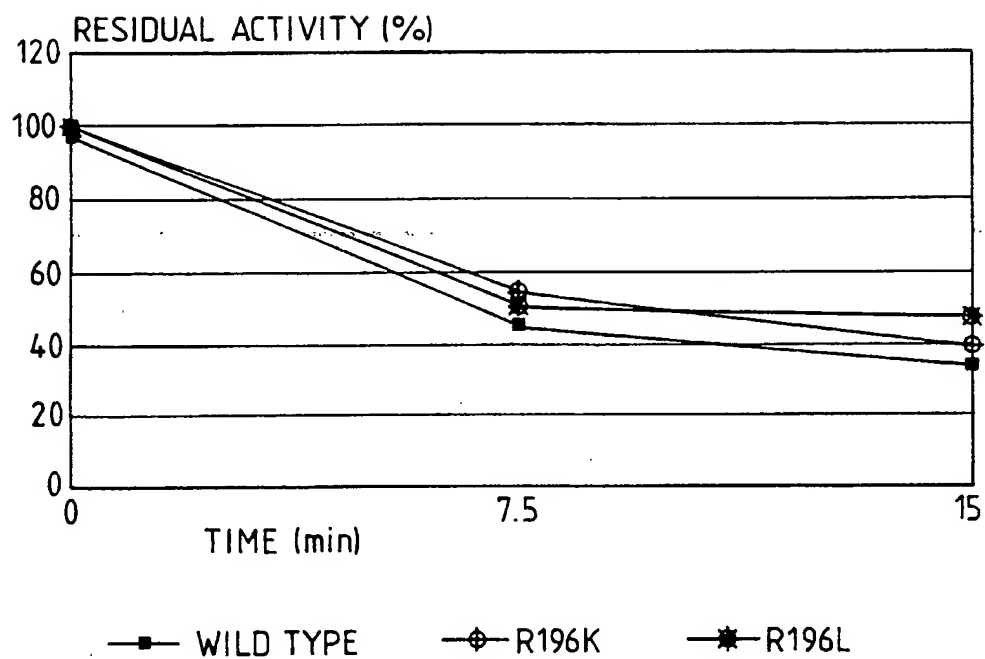
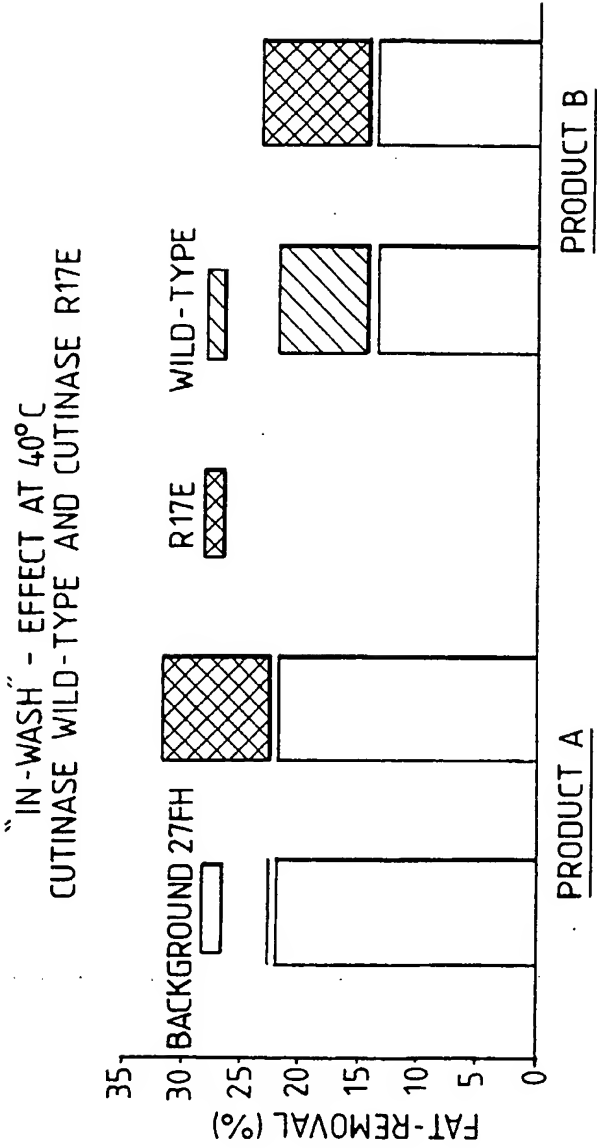


Fig. 16.



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter: nal Application No

PCT/EP 93/03551

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 5 C12N15/55 C12N1/15 C12N1/19 C12N9/18 C11D3/386
C12N15/62

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 5 C12N C12R

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	EP,A,0 375 102 (THE CHLOROX COMPANY) 27 June 1990 see page 6, line 57 - line 58 see page 7, line 1 - line 10 see page 9, line 35 - line 58 see page 11; example 1	1
Y	---	28
Y	WO,A,88 09367 (GENENCOR INC) 1 December 1988 cited in the application ---	28
A	WO,A,92 05249 (NOVO NORDISK A/S) 2 April 1992 cited in the application ---	1-27
	--- -/--	

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

27 April 1994

Date of mailing of the international search report

20. 05. 94

Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Gac, G

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No

PCT/EP 93/03551

C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT		
Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
E	WO,A,94 03578 (UNILEVER PLC) 17 February 1994 see the whole document ---	1-28
A	NATURE vol. 356, no. 6370 , 16 April 1992 pages 615 - 618 MARTINEZ ET AL. 'Fusarium solani cutinase is a lipolytic enzyme with a catalytic serine accessible to solvent' cited in the application ---	1,9-12
A	WO,A,90 09446 (PLANT GENETICS SYSTEMS N.V.) 23 August 1990 cited in the application ---	1-27
A	PROC. NATL ACAD. SCI. USA vol. 81, no. 13 , July 1984 pages 3939 - 3943 SOLIDAY ET AL. 'Cloning and structure determination of cDNA for cutinase, an enzyme involved in fungal penetration of plants' see the whole document ---	1,9-11, 14,20,24
A	BIOCHEMISTRY vol. 26, no. 24 , 1 December 1987 pages 7883 - 7892 ETTINGER ET AL. 'Structure of cutinase gene, cDNA, and the derived amino acid sequence from phytopathogenic fungi' ---	1,9-11, 14,20,24
A	MOL. GEN. GENET. vol. 232, no. 2 , March 1992 pages 174 - 182 SWEIGARD ET AL. 'Cloning and analysis of CUT1, a cutinase gene from Magnaporthe grisea' -----	1,7, 9-11,14, 16,20,24

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/EP 93/03551

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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WO-A-8809367	01-12-88	EP-A- 0322429 US-A- 4981611	05-07-89 01-01-91
WO-A-9205249	02-04-92	AU-A- 8617291 CA-A- 2092615 EP-A- 0548228 JP-T- 6501153	15-04-92 14-03-92 30-06-93 10-02-94
WO-A-9403578	17-02-94	NONE	
WO-A-9009446	23-08-90	NONE	